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SPITI¹ : A PLACE OF LAMAISM IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

ASHWANI KUMAR *

The State of Himachal Pradesh is mountainous in character and covered by the ranges of the Himalayas and the Shivaliks. The name Himachal derives its origin from two Hindi words namely "Him" and "Achal" meaning "Snow" and "Lap" respectively. Himachal Pradesh literally means the "Snow of mountains". It is situated in the heart of the Western Himalaya. Himachal Pradesh lies in North India in the Himalaya Mountains, immediately west of the border with Tibet.² According to the *Puranas*, Himachal is the Jalandhara khand³ of the Himalaya.³ In praising the glories of Himachal the *Skand Puranas* say, "he who thinks of Himachal, though he may not behold, is greater than he who performs worship in Kashi and shall have pardon for all his sins. In a hundred age of gods I could not tell them of the glories of Himachal where Shiva lived and the Ganges fell from the foot of Vishnu like slender thread of lotus flower."⁴ The geographical section of the *Mahabharata* and *Puranas* (*Bhuvan-Kosh*) mention the mountains and river system of Himachal and its ancient tribes and geographical divisions. The pre-Aryan and Aryan History of Himachal Pradesh is based on the epics like *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Mahabharata*, etc. In the *Regveda*, ten rivers are propitiated and of these four namely *Arikri* (Chenab), *Purashani* (Ravi), *Arijikya* (Beas), *Satuderi* (Satluj) have been flowing through the region now falling in the State of Himachal Pradesh. The Himachal Pradesh extends between 33° 21'40" North to 33° 12'44" North latitudes, and 75° 47'55" East to 79° 02' 20" East longitudes.⁵ Himachal Pradesh became a full-fledged State of the Indian Union on January 25, 1971, with an area of 55,673 sq. km. According to the Census of 1991 its total population was 51, 70,877. Administratively Himachal Pradesh has been divided into twelve districts namely, Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Lahoul Spiti, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmaour, Solan and Una. Shimla, the summer capital of British India, became the capital of Himachal Pradesh on the foundation of the State. During the reorganization of the Punjab State, the Lahoul and Spiti area of the erstwhile Punjab State were transferred to Himachal Pradesh on 1st November 1966. The region like Lahoul, Spiti, Kinnaur, Pangi and Bharmour were declared the tribal areas of the State. The Lahoul Spiti district of the State is the largest district with an area of 13,835 sq. km., while Hamirpur district with an area of

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1. In Tibetan it is spelt as 'Spiti' and pronounced as 'Piti'.

2. *Lexicon Universal Encyclopaedia*, Lexicon Publication, Inc. New York, 1987, No. 10, p. 165.

3. Rahul Sanskritayan, *Himalaya Parichaya*-- (i) Garhwal, Allahabad, 1953, p. 1.

4. Mian Govermdhan Singh, *History of Himachal Pradesh*, Delhi, 1982, p. 9

5. R. L. Singh, *India A Regional Geography*, Varanasi, 1987, p. 390.

1,118 sq. km., is the smallest district of the State. According to the Census of 1991 the total population of Lahoul-Spiti is 31,294 and 3,69,128 of Hamirpur. The density of population is 93 persons per sq. km. The highest density is, however, found in Hamirpur district in which 330 persons live per sq. km., the least density of 2 persons per sq. km., is found in Lahoul-Spiti district.

Lahoul and Spiti, one of the border district of India in Himachal Pradesh is clear from the name that the district comprises two different mountain tracts, Lahoul and Spiti. Lahoul and Spiti are separated from each other by the great Himalaya range named Kunzam Pass with its heights 4590 meters. The district of Lahoul and Spiti came into existence with the formation of these two parts into a revenue district. In 1941, Spiti with Lahoul was constituted into a separate sub-Tehsil of Kullu sub-division which had its head quarter at Keylong.⁶ Lahoul and Spiti, the two different geographical units beyond Rohtang and Kunzam Pass in Himachal were put together to form a new district in 1960. Later on after the formation of Lahoul and Spiti into a district, in 1960, Spiti formed into a separate sub-division with its headquarters at Kaza.⁷ The two divisions of the district namely Lahoul and Spiti stand entirely different in terms of physical and geographical feature and socio-economic characteristics. The Kunzam Pass is a natural boundary between Lahoul and Spiti sub-division of the district, and also a climatic barriers between the semi-arid and alpine conditions of Lahoul valley and the arid and arctic high lands of Spiti region.

The name "Spiti" in Tibetan is spelt as "Spiti" and locally pronounced as "Piti" is said to mean, "middle country" and refers to the geographical position of the country between India, Tibet and the old Kingdom of Kashmir. O.C. Handa⁸ writes that Spiti has remained a middle region through its known history between the ancient Buddhist Kingdom of Ladakh and Guge; in the later medieval period between the British India, Kashmir, Tibet and Bushahr and now between Indian mainland and China. The valley of Spiti is situated between 31°42' North to 33°0" North latitude and 77°37' East to 78°35' East longitudes. The area of Spiti valley is about 2131 sq. km.⁸ The Spiti is a typical mountain desert and the average rainfall is about 17.7 cms. The highest village of Spiti is Gette (Near Kibar), situated at the height of about 4270 meters. The region of Spiti may be considered more mountainous and elevated than Lahoul, because the lowest part of the Spiti valley is although situated at high altitude but it is quite wide and open. Spiti river is the main river of the Spiti region which flows in both the districts of Lahoul-Spiti and Kinnaur.⁹ The people of the Spiti valley are ardent Buddhist and belong ethnically to the Mongoloid race. S.S. Charak¹⁰ states that the people of Lahoul and Spiti have Mongolian feature. He also writes that the inhabitants of this mountainous country are Bhots, with a strong infusion of Tatar blood. It is related that not many years ago a colony of 200 persons emigrated from China, probably from Tibet. Spitians, therefore, bear unmistakable features on their faces of the Chinese or Mongolian descent.¹¹ Mian Goverdhan Singh¹² writes, the people of Spiti usually known as the Bhot are akin to the people of Western Tibet but are usually short statured. He

6. The District Gazetteer of Lahoul and Spiti, Shimla, 1971, p. 1.

7. *Encyclopaedia of India*, Vol. XVII, Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 1992, p. 53.

8. O. C. Handa, *Tabo Monastery and Buddhism in the Trans-Himalaya*, Delhi, 1994, p. 21.

9. Rahul Sanskritayan, *Himachal*, Vol. 1, New Delhi, 1994, p. 381.

10. S. S. Charak, *History and Culture of Himalayan States*, Vol. 3, New Delhi, 1979, p. 13.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

12. Mian Goverdhan Singh, *Himachal Pradesh, Culture and Economy*, Shimla, 1988, p. 18.

further adds that they are perhaps the dissidents of those who migrated under adverse political condition from Tibet in the ninth and tenth centuries. There exist evidence to the migration of people from Zaskar and other part of Ladakh to Spiti. It is true that people migrated from Tibet to Western region including Lahoul-Spiti, Kinnaur and Chamba during the adverse political condition in Tibet. But it is not possible to predict, like Goverdhan Singh, that the people living in this area perhaps the dissidents of those who migrated under adverse political condition from Tibet in the ninth and tenth centuries. Before the ninth century there was already human settlement. It reflects from the copper-plate deed of Nirmand 630 A.D., that the valley of Spiti was inhabited by the people and was ruled by a Hindu dynasty Rajas, bearing the surname of suffix of Sena. The earliest evidence on the History of Spiti region indicates that it was ruled by the Hindu rulers of Sena clan, of which the name of Samundrasena and his ancestors i.e., Varunasena, Sanjaysena and Ravisena as known from former Nirmand Copper-plate deed of 630 A.D.¹³ In this Copper-plate there is also mentioned that Samundrasena calls himself *Mahasamanta* i.e. not a sovereign ruler but a subordinate chief of some paramount. O.C. Handa¹⁴ suggests that the paramount ruler of *mahasamanta* Samundrasena should not have been the king of Tibet but of Kashmir. On the other hand Rahul Sanskritayan¹⁵ suggests that during the mid of the 7th century to the 9th century there is possibility of Spiti under the Tibetan kings. Then the Sumundrasena may be the *Mahasamanta* of the western Tibetan King. It seems true, through the study of their culture, religion and their social activities of the people of Spiti, that they are very much akin to Tibetan even now a days also. During the Ladakhi rule in later, the *Nonos* of Spiti, were the ruler of Spiti. The term Nono is derived from the Greek.¹⁶ Regarding the inhabitants of Spiti, S.S. Chib writes, "Well-built and hardy Spitians live in the Spiti division of the Lahoul-Spiti District. Collectively called Spitians they consists of many tribes like Jads, Khampas, Bhots, Swanglas etc."¹⁷ Spiti has always been inhabited by Tibetians and the western dialect of the Tibetan language is spoken there. The language they speak is pure Tibetan but now they become able to understand Indian dialects as a result of their close communication with the surrounding Himachali people. The social system of Spiti valley is mainly based on Tibetan style. An important feature of their social system is the polyandry. Polyandry mostly exists in all the areas of Himalaya. This is a system of marriage in which a lady is treated the wife of all the brothers of a family. In this system the elder brother of a family is ceremoniously married with a woman and there is an understanding between the other brothers and the lady become the common wife of all brothers. But the system of marriage existing in Spiti is quite different from it. Rahul Sanskritayan¹⁸ writes that the marriage system of Spiti is the familiar system of marriage of Tibet. It means due to the influence of Tibetan culture they have adopted their marriage and other social system from Tibet. Like Tibet, in Spiti, when the eldest brother of a family marries, he enters upon his office as head of the family and

13. J. Hutchison, and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of Punjab Hill State*, Reprint, Shimla, 1982, p. 484.

14. O. C. Handa, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

15. Rahul Sanskritayan, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

16. Edwin, T. Alkisson, *The Himalaya Gazetteer*, Vol. 2, Part-I, Reprint, Delhi, 1973, p. 404.

17. S. S. Chib. *This Beautiful India, Himachal Pradesh*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 104.

18. Rahul Sanskritayan, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

takes over the parents home and land. His father retires and goes to live in a small house which is called Khang Chung (small house). All the younger brothers are sent to the monastery in their childhood and are trained to become Lamas. If the head of the family dies without leaving a son, or if the surviving son is too young to assess the duties of a pater families, the younger brother leaves the monastery and takes over the family estate. To leave the monastery he has to pay some fees. He has the right to treat his brother's widow as his own wife. She can not object and there is no need of marriage ceremony. If the head of the family has only daughter and no male issue, he sometimes adopts a son-in-law as his heir. *Indian Antiquary*¹⁹ mentions that, however, if the land-owner have a younger brother who would ordinary be a Lama he can object, because a son-in-law can only be taken into the house as heir with his consent and he can claim to cohabit with the land owners' wife and beget a son. Or if the wife is old, he can marry another woman and try to get a son. If he does, the elder sonless brother is turned into the Khang Chung (small house) and the Lama takes possession of the Khang Chhen (big house). There is also further mentioned that once a man adopts a son, he can not set aside and there can be no adoption if a real son exists. If after adopting a son, a real son is born, the later becomes younger son and has to become a Lama or is given a field for maintenance, while the adopted son gets the main portion of the land. The real son can not object.²⁰ S.S. Charak²¹ writes, on the whole not polyandry but monogamy is a custom in Spiti and the tradition of primogeniture has kept the population low. In Spiti if a child dies without being named, it is buried. If it dies after the naming ceremony, the sacred books are consulted to dispose of the body.²² The birth and death system of the people of Spiti are based on Tibetan style.

The religious life of the people of the Spiti before the advent of Buddhism is difficult to say with authenticity. After going through the sources and the literature, it becomes evident that there was different kind of religion prevailing before the advent of Buddhism, which was not similar to Hinduism, Christianity, Muslim etc. The feature of that primitive religion was to some extent related to Bon-Chos (Bon-Religion), the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet. There are many such references of this primitive creed. The salient points of the Bon faith as practices and rites are still in vague both in the Ladakh area and in the Tibetan speaking area of Bhutan, India and Nepal. Francke²³ mentions that human sacrifices was probably a leading feature of this primitive creed. They worship *Ibex*, *Swastika* and *Yoni*. *Ibex* is a symbol of fertility according to the pre-Buddhist religion. The *Sawastika* was already a symbol of the Sun, and *Yoni* of the female principle. The importance of female deities in Bon religion is more than male deities. This primitive religion may have long survived from the vedic period in the Bon-Chos or religion of Bon-pos, a kind of *Shamanism*. The practices of raising prayer flags, the worshipping of snakes, mountain and trees and the cult containing of local deities are all the marks of Bon religion. In the olden days the mind of the people was dominated by fear and they were surprised with the natural things like water, fire, mountain, forests and Sun, Moon, etc. They have fear if they harm these things and when they want to use these things first

19. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.-XXXVIII, Bombay, 1909, p. 50.

20. *Ibid*.

21. S. S. Charak, *This Beautiful India, Himachal Pradesh*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 104.

22. *Indian Antiquary*, p. 50.

23. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. I, Reprint, New Delhi 1972, p. 22.

time, they offer them animal sacrifice. The people sacrifice animals to them in times of crisis or while seeking favours. H. A. Rose writes that "the objects of this religion was to attain power over the material universe generally and in particular to get children, ensure good harvests, and destroy enemies or at least secure immunity from their onslaught."²⁴ In the Himalaya there are different types of rock carving, pre-Buddhist and these primitive rock-carving can be seen at Tabo, Lari in Spiti valley. Francke²⁵ writes that below the village Lari there are many ancient rock-carving, among which we note, in particular, the *Ibex* and *Swastika*. One of the carvings appears to represent the 'Willow of the World' with its six branches and six roots are of the symbols of the pre-Buddhist religion of the people." Francke²⁶ finds these primitive rock-carving at Lari and Tabo in Spiti valley during his field survey of the areas in 1903.²⁷ The primitive religion of the western Himalaya region known as the Bon-Chos, i.e. the religion of the Bon-pos, have been the *Ibex* and *Swastika*—two most important cult symbols of this religion. Most of Bon-pos, the aboriginal inhabitants of this region, had been proselytized to Buddhism during the 8th century A. D. The Bon-Chos has also been called Yung-drung Bon i.e. the *Swastika* Bon. Bon-pos regarded *Ibex* the most important cult objective of the male creative principle. The followers of Bon crave its image on a rock and propitiate it whenever a child was born in a family.²⁸

The earliest historical evidence about the effort to introduce Buddhism in the Himalaya region is found in the missionary activities of Ashoka. In the 3rd century B.C. evidently the region fall under the Emperor Ashoka, who was an evident followers of Buddhism. Ashoka wanted to universalize the moral preaching of the Buddha in his empire and beyond in the neighbouring countries and sent religious missions to many foreign countries. It is known from the Ceylonese sources *Mahavamsa*²⁹ and *Dipavamsa*³⁰ that the missionary delegation (*dharma-mahamatre*) headed by *Majjhantika* went to Kashmir and Gandhara region. Another delegation led by *Majjhima* which included *kassapagota*, *Alkadewa*, *Dundubhisara* and *Sahadeva*, were deputed in the Himalaya region. During the period of Ashoka, the 3rd Buddhist Council held and *Tehara Moggaliputta Tissa* sent *Theras* for spreading Buddhism in the adjacent or border region of Gandhara, Kashmir and Himvant or Himalaya etc. This fact is also corroborated from the inscription on a relic-box found in the stupa No-2 of *Sanchi* where is the name of *Majjhima* and *Moggaliputta Tissa* figure among others.³¹ The source clearly shows the work done by *Bikkhus* (order of Monks) and other followers in spreading Buddhism and the missionary activities of Ashoka. In the vernacular Buddhist lore, we learn about the missionary activities of *Sthavira Angira* around the *Kailash*, where he is known to have established a temporary Buddhist monastery in 137 B.C.³² The further development

24. H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Cast of the Punjab and the North-West frontier Province*, Vol. I, Reprint Patiala, 1970, p. 61.

25. A. H. Francke, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 37.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38, 105.

27. *Ibid.*, PL. XIV (A), p. 38.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

29. Wilhelm Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, New Delhi, 1986, Chapter, XII., p. 81.

30. Hermann Gidenberg, *The Dipavamsa*, London, 1987, Chapter VIII, pp. 159-160.

31. A. Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes of Buddhist Monuments of Central India*, Varanasi, 1966, p. 185.

32. L. A. Waddell, *Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 19fn.

of Buddhism in the area of Spiti can be found in the eighth century A. D. The credit for the development of Buddhism in the Himalaya in the eighth century goes to one missionary known as *Padmasambhava* or *Urgian Rimpoche*. The Gungari monastery in the Spiti area is the main centre of the Nyingma-pa (the old one) sect, and this monastery is believed to have been founded by Padmasambhava. Francke³³ mentions that at the monastery, however, they have an ancient and beautiful wood carving of teak wood, representing Buddha surrounded Bodhisattvas. O. C. Handa writes that, "But some of the carved wooded specimen in the monastery are definitely old, and Gungari must have remained an ancient site of the Padmasambhava day."³⁴ As Sarat Chandra Das has shown, the Nyingma-pa order has much of its literature in common with Bon-pos, the followers of the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet.³⁵

After the development of Tibetan Language, translation of Buddhist work from Sanskrit to Tibetan started in Tibet. Rin-chen-bzang-po was summoned by the King lha-l de Hod-l de of Guge to work with scholars in the academy of Buddhist learning which was already flourished at Tholing in 1025 A.D.³⁶ For the translation work of the Buddhist scriptures and other object a place was selected in the province of Purang for the establishment of temples and monasteries, so the work of translation could be carried out in a proper way. Rin-chen-bzang-po under the patronage of King Lha-l de embarked upon the task of founding 108 temples from Zher to Purang as far as Hobulangka (Chini in Kinnaur), and at various other places in Ladakh, Guge and the boundary areas besides many Chortens (stupas)³⁷. We are here only mentioning the temples founded by Rin-chen-bzang-po in Spiti listed in the biography of Rin-chin-bzang-po completed by dpal-Ye-shes⁴⁰.

1. Li-ri (Lari in Spiti)
2. Ta-pho (Tabo in Spiti)

Joseph Gergan discovered another biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po in which three principal monasteries and seventeen small temples, out of the 108 founded by him are listed.⁴¹ There are also a new site of the monastery of Spiti in that biography which is as follows :

1. Pi-ti (apparently indicating chos-khor of Gran-mkhar Dhankar) which had been the capital of Spiti.

Besides these there are other temples in Spiti which may belong to the period contemporaneous with Rin-chen-bzang-po, i.e., 11th century A.D. These are as follows :

1. Na-than in Spyi-ti
2. Lha-bla mahi-dgon-pa of ski-bar (Kibar in Spiti).

33. A. H. Francke, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 31.

34. O. C. Handa, *Buddhist Monasteries in Himachal Pradesh*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 83.

35. A. H. Francke, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 31.

36. Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries in India*, Delhi, 1988, Appendix, II, p. 367.

37. Snellgrove and Skorupski, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1980, p. 91.

38. rDo-rJe-tshe-brtan, *Collected Biographical Material about Lo-chan Rin-chan-bZang-po and his subsequent Re-embodiments*, Delhi, 1979. The third biography in this collection is the work of dpal-Ye-shes and is titled as the Saving Cord of the Crysta Rosary in the translation vide Snellgrove-Skorupski, *op. cit.*, Vol-II.

39. H. Lee Shuttleworth, *Lha-Lun Temple, Spyi-ti*, Calcutta, 1929, p. 1, preface by A. H. Francke.

40. *Gazetteer of Kangra District*, part-II, Lahoul Spiti, Lahore, 1917, p. 269.

41. *Himachal Pradesh Census Handbook*, Lahoul-Spiti, Shimla, 1981, pp. 86-89.

The Lha-lun in Spiti region which, by tradition are associated with Rin-chen-bzang-po.

Through the biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po we also came to know that the great *lotsaba* in collaboration with other *lotsaba* and Indian translator translated 161 work in total. The translation work included eighteen treaties on the *Sutra* and *Tantra* which form part of *Kangyur*, thirty three work of commentary on *Sutras* and 110 treaties of commentary on *Tantras*. Among these fourteen works are exclusively translated by him and the remaining 147 works he collaborated with other *Lotsaba* and Indian translators. At the period of 11th century, the people of Spiti had developed very good relationship with the Tibetans. Spitians have direct link with the people of Tibet in social, cultural and religious matter and the Tibetan monks also take interest in the propagation of Buddhism there. To achieve this objective they established monastic centre there and the people embraced the Tibetan form of Buddhism completely. By the efforts of Tibetan, Buddhism in the form of Lamaism established there and whose many monasteries are distinguished by their flat roofs. Some of the monastery have beautiful painting depicting scenes from the Jataks and the Buddha's life. Some monastery of Spiti which are special mention are Tabo, Ki and Dhankar. Before 1850 A. D. there was five monasteries in Spiti.⁴² According to the Census Report there are now 30 monastery in Spiti.⁴³ The famous Mahayana Mantra "*Om Mani Padme Hum*" is considered by the Buddhist as saviour from all dangers, and is almost continuously recited by the devoted person. Not only that, it is often written on a piece of cloth or inscribed on a stone and left on the place

42. The following table reproduced from the report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Kangra District, Punjab by George Carnace Barnes for 1885 would reveal the quantum of *Pun* exacted by the five major monasteries of Spiti :

Name of the Monastery	No. of Lamas	Name of <i>Kothis</i> attached	Quantity of <i>Pun</i>	
			<i>Khal</i>	<i>Teh.</i>
1. Dhankar	90	Sham	137	14
		Chuzi	120	-
		Todpa	73	17
			331	11
2. Tabo	32	Sham	53	5
		Chuzi	134	19
		Todpa	10	10
			198	14
3. Ki	100	Sham	379	4
		Chuzi	14	-
		Todpa	60	-
			453	4
4. Tangyud	60	Chuzi	222	-
		Barjik	87	16
		Todpa	9	12
		Pin	20	-
			339	
5. Pin	100	Pin	81	10

G. C. Barnes, *Land Revenue Settlement of the Kangra District*, 1883-84, Lahore, 1889; O. C. Handa, op. cit., No. 14, p. 131.

43. G. D. Khosla, *Himalayan Circuit*, New York, 1956, p. 135.

where it is pronounced by the devoted person. In the memories of Lama they also built Stupa in which the relics of Lama's and religious books are kept. Such monuments are called mane walls or chortens can be seen every where near village on the topes of passes and bank of rivers. The complete area of Spiti follows the Lamastic form of Buddhism. The monasteries of the area are based on the Tibetan style and education was gained and delivered in these monasteries through a collective body of teachers. These monasteries are the main source of knowledge to the inhabitants of Spiti. The base of their education was Indian system of study which not only included the scriptural education but covered literature, medicine, arts, crafts, philosophy, astrology and many other subjects. In the field of arts and crafts, there have several as scriptoria for the illustrating and copying of manuscripts and workshop for casting images, painting murals and *Thankas* and repositories for priceless work of Art. The endowed handed property has been the oldest and single most important source of income for the monasteries. King Ral-pa-ch'en was the first to endow hand to the monasteries and authorize them to collect revenue and taxes in the assigned territory. This tradition has continued almost to the present day. The endowment of the monasteries of the Spiti valley consist of *Pun*, that is the specified share of total revenue collected from the assigned *Kothis*.⁴⁴ The rent free land-holding of the monasteries in Spiti are extremely small. In Spiti the only religion of the people is Buddhism which is entirely based on Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet. In Spiti Buddhism is practiced in purer form than the other part of Himachal Pradesh and also it is better organised there. The monasteries of Spiti are long and larger number of monks and nuns reside there in. In Spiti there are historical evidence of the Tibetan Buddhism development in the end of tenth or beginning of the 11th century, when the Rin-chen-bzang-po built the monasteries there. Among them is the Tabo monastery in Spiti which is going to celebrate one thousand years of its establishment in June 1996. During the development of Buddhism in Tibet, there also arose sects of Buddhism like India. There are now only four sects of Tibetan existing such as Nyingma-pa, Kagyud-pa, Sakya and Gelug-pa. These sects also became influential over time on the area of Spiti. Presently in Spiti out of 30 monasteries 21 monasteries are ruled by the Gelug-pa sect, which arose at the beginning of the fifteenth century A. D. as a regeneration of the Kahdam-pa sect by Tsong-Kha-pa. Gelug-pa the dominant sect of Tibetan Buddhism and the established Church of Lamaism, ruled over the majority of the monastery in Spiti. The Gelug-pas are proponents of the *Prasangika Madhyamaka* philosophical tradition and they largely adopted the methods of practice taught by *Atisa* in the Kadam-pa system. Their *Tantrik* teachings from the New Translation of the *Tantras*, are the *Kriyayoga Tantra*, *Caryayoga Tantra*, *Yoga Tantra* and *Anuttarayoga Tantra*. This sect, for example, favour practices associated with Avalokitesvara Manjusri, Vajrapani green and white tara, Bhaisajyaguru, Guhyasamaja, Yamantaka, Heruka Cakrasamvara, Vajrayogini, and Kalcakra. In Spiti where now Gelug-pa sect ruled over the majority of the monasteries, must be their influence of other sect before the development of Gelug-pa sect in the 15th century A. D. In Spiti there is yet another sect of the Lamas in Pin Valley of Spiti who are known as *Buzhens*. *Buzhens* are the Lamas who entertain people by acting plays and chanting legends. They marry and their son became *Buzhens*. They themselves live in Gompas (monastery) but their families

44. L. A. Wadelell, *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 39.

and children live in villages. The Lamas do not shave their heads like the monks of other sect. The Lamas wander about the country and acting plays. According to legend the *Buzhen* order was founded by one Thang-teong Gyalpo (king of desert) under the circumstances that certain kind of Lhasa the famous Langderma, converted the people of Tibet from Buddhism to a new religion of his own.⁴⁵ It is clear from these references that the Spiti area in the past was more closely contacted in culture and religious activities with Tibet instead of India. The religious matter can be proved by changing the 10th or 11th centuries monastery in to Gelug-pa sect in the 15th century. Because in Tibet, there are so many examples of changing the monastery of other sect into those sect which one became influential over-time. When the Dalai Lama became the head of Gelug-pa sect, L.A. Waddell⁴⁶ writes, "This daring Dalai Lama, high-handed and resourceful, lost no time in consolidating his rule as priest-king and the extension of his sect by the forcible appropriation of many monasteries of the other seat." He also adds, "Under the succeeding Mongol emperors, the Sakya primacy seems to have maintained much of its political supremacy, and to have used its power as a church militant to oppress its rival sects. Thus it burned the great Kargyu-pa monastery of Dikung about 1320 A. D."⁴⁶ when the changing in the religious matter took place at Tibet that was soon followed in Spiti area. We can also take the example of Lahoul where out of 29 monasteries, 28 is ruled by Kagyud-pa sub sect Dug-pa Kagyud.⁴⁷ It is due to this reason that this area of Lahoul was more closely linked in their relation with Ladakh instead of direct from Tibet. In Ladakh there is the dominance of Kagyud-pa sect from its early period to this present time also. That's why the monasteries of Lahoul have maintained their old relation and tradition. In other side the Spiti region was more closely linked with Tibet. That's why the changing took place in the Lamaism of Tibet was soon followed by the people of Spiti. When Gelug-pa sect became dominant sect in Tibet, they changed the monasteries of other sects into their own sect, likewise this must have happened in the area of Spiti. That's why at presently there is the dominance of the Gelug-up sect the established church of Lamaism. The Lama here performs various religious ceremonies right from birth to death in Spiti. In this area where the modern medical facilities were unheard of till a few decades ago and the people depended entirely upon the Lama doctors in the monasteries for their medical needs. The Lama evolved their own systems of medicines based on the age-old Ayurvedic system of India and the local herbal therapy.

Spiti is the only place in the western Himalaya where the original form of Lamaism are preserved and practiced till today faithfully with the modernization. The Spiti had the age-old relation with Tibet, which can be traced back to the period of Bon-chos. When the Bon-religion was familiar in Tibet it was simultaneously practiced in the Spiti region. Bon religion was also practiced in the other regions also, but its clear resemblance can be seen only in Spiti. Latter, which type of religious changes took place in Tibet, that was also followed in the area of Spiti.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

46. O. C. Handa, *op. cit.*, Appendix, A., p. 186.

47. Lamaism is the dominant Tibetan form of Buddhism, practised by Tibetan monk both in their own country and in the lands surrounding it. Originally "Lama" was a word for a high-ranking spiritual teacher but later it came to be used of every monk and the name of Buddhism followed by Tibetan became popularly known as Lamaism.

When the Tibetan Buddhism starts their expansion in the western area of Tibet especially the province of Guge, Spiti was very near and closely connected with Guge, at that time, probably accepted by the scholars. At the same time when the king of Guge take initiative in the spreading of Buddhism in this area, must at that time Spitian have converted into Tibetan Buddhism which is prevailing there till today. With the persecution of Tibetan Buddhist monks by the Glong-der-ma, must have compelled the monks to take shelter in Spiti which was safe from the persecution of the king. When the western Tibet became the centre of Buddhism learning in Tibet, it played very important role in spreading the teaching of Buddha in the region of Spiti. Their religious influence increase later on and the Gelug-pa, the established church of Lamaism ruled over the minds of the inhabitants of Spiti and established the Church of Lamaism in the western Himalaya.

A DIMENSION OF JUDICIAL PERSPECTIVE IN ANCIENT INDIA : A CASE STUDY OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM C. 300 B. C. TO 650 A. D.

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To impart justice to the common people was considered to be the most significant duty of the kings in the northern states of ancient India. In order to maintain law and order and to curb internal disturbances, the system of judiciary came into existence. The study of the inscriptions of the monarchs reveals that *Dharma* was the pivot of the Indian Judicial system in ancient times. The First Pillar Edict¹ of Maurya King Ashoka clearly mentions that this is the law namely, that which implies rearing by *Dharma*, providing by *Dharma*, making happy by *Dharma* and guiding by *Dharma*. The Sixth Pillar Edict² of the same king records that he took it as his important duty to provide welfare and happiness to the people of his state. He also states, "Whatever efforts are needed will be made so that I may discharge the debt (which I owe) to living beings. It is important that I may make them happy in this world."³ This shows the king's concern for the welfare of his subjects and this makes evident that the king in ancient India was righteous and he followed the path of *Dharma*. Besides attending to the usual needs of the people, he tried to rule according to *Dharma* so that proper justice be imparted to them as per the practice enjoined by *Dharma*. Similarly, the Allahabad Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta also describes that one of the main duties of the kings during the period was to follow the path of *Dharma*⁴ and to support the miserable, the poor, the helpless and the afflicted. The facts of the Inscription are supported by the contemporary literature. Manu⁵ says : "Either the judge should not enter the court or he must speak the truth. One who remains silent or speaks untruth while on duty, is to be blamed for sin. Where *Adharma* (injustice) prevails over *Dharma* (justice), or untruth curtails truthfulness and the courtiers remain silent spectators, destruction takes the natural

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1. E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Ashoka, C. I. I.*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1969, p. 119.; B. M. Barua, *Ashoka*, Calcutta, 1934, p. 230.
एष हि विधि या इयं धमेन पालना धमेन विधाने सुखियना धमेने गोतीति ।
2. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 335; *Epigraphia Indica*, II, p. 454.
4. J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the early Gupta kings and their successors, C. I. I.*, Vol-III, Varanasi, Rpt., 1970.
5. In ancient India the word *Dharma* was used in the sense of law, duty, religion, morality, virtue, piety, justice, righteousness and established customs. In wider sense, *Dharma* comprised rules and principles governing the conduct of man as a social being.
6. *Manu Smriti*, Sanskrit text and Hindi translation by K. P. Sharma Divedi, Bombay, 1922, Ch. 8.

course. Manu further states where the real culprit is punished, the king and his courtiers are free from sin. *Dharma* is a real friend of the king and it goes with him even after his death. Wherever injustice prevails, the king, the witness, the courtiers and the culprit are guilty, each sharing 25 per cent of the sin. Nilkantha⁷ in *Vyavaharamayukha* opines that a courtier appointed by the king must follow *Dharma*. Thus the inscriptions and the literary sources make it clear that the *Dharma* had been the source of justice and a system of judiciary existed in ancient states during the period under study. It was considered the most pious and important duty of the kings to rule according to *Dharma* so that justice could be imparted to the people properly. This research paper highlights the following two ingredients of the judicial administration prevalent in those days :

(A) Judicial Structure

(B) The Modes of Crime and Punishment.

(A) Judicial Structure

Like the system of general administration, the judicial system was of multi level. The judicial structure was organised with the village court at the lowest rung and the king as the final court of appeal. The judicial structure was, therefore, organised in two categories (i) judicial system at local level and (ii) the judicial courts established by the kings.

I. Judicial System at Local Level

(i) Kula

The study of the inscriptions reveals a well organised judicial system at the village level. The Dhanaidaha Copper Plate Inscriptions⁸ of Kumaragupta-I and the Demodarpur Copper Plate Inscriptions⁹ of Buddhagupta frequently refer to the significant term *Astakuladhikarna*. R. G. Basak¹⁰ interprets that *Astakuladhikarna* was an officer in the village supervising authority over eight *Kulas* while R. D. Bannerji¹¹ translates the term to mean a local officer who exercised authority over eight villages. D. C. Sircar¹² records it as a village board representing eight or more families. V. V. R. Dikshitar¹³ holds that it means 'an officer related with the land transactions'. According to P. L. Gupta¹⁴, *Astakuladhikarna* worked as a court of justice in earlier times which even continued during the Gupta times dealing with the land transactions. N. N. Dasgupta¹⁵ elaborates that *Astakuladhikarna* would mean the Adhikarana or judicial court in the village composed of (more or less) eight judges and it is analogous to the phrase '*Jyesthadhikaranaka Damukapramukhamadhikaranam*' which occurs in the Gurahatt grant of Somacaradeva¹⁶. Thus he considers it to be equivalent to the *Atthakulaka*

7. *Vyavaharamayukha* of Bhatta Nilkantha, ed., P. V. Kane, Poona, 1926, p. 3.

8. *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII, No. 23, p. 348.

9. *Ibid.*, XV, No. 7, p. 137.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal* (NS) V, No. 11, p. 460.

12. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XI, p. 16.

13. V. V. R. Dikshitar, *Gupta Polity*, Madras, 1952, p. 274.

14. P. L. Gupta, *The Imperial Guptas*, Vol. II, Varanasi, 1979, pp. 35-36.

15. *Indian Culture*, V, No. I, p. 111.

16. *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII, No. 11, p. 78.

interpreted to mean a judicial institution comprising judges from all the eight castes (By George Turnour¹⁷ in 1838) which occurs in the *Atthakatha* of Buddhaghosha.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, the above statements clearly refer to the *Astakuladhikarna* as a body in the ancient village administration that comprised members of eight *Kulas*¹⁹ (families). Nilkantha²⁰ quotes that the king should form a *Sabha* or court; the *Sabha* is the *Dharmadhikarana*. Brihaspati²¹, however, prescribes that the *Kula* court should try law suits excepting those pertaining to crime. Thus it is apparent that the *Astakuladhikarna* was a body in ancient village administration that comprised eight members of different *Kulas* (families). The main function of this court was to decide the civil cases only, i.e., general disputes and the disputes that arose over land transactions.

(ii) *Sreni*

The *Sreni* was the next higher agency connected with the village judicial system during the period under study. The inscriptions of the Guptas in large number refer to the term *Sreni*. The Damodarpur Copper Plate Inscriptions of Kumaragupta²² and Bhanugupta²³ mention the terms *Nagrasresthin*, *Sarthavaha*, *Prathamakullka* and *Prathamakayastha* as representatives of their *Srenis* in the *Adhishthanadhikarana* (an administrative board or body established by the king at particular places, especially at the district capitals). It is not known whether they were paid salary by the state or were doing the work in honorary capacity. Whatever be the case it seems that their presence in the judicial court was essential to assist the head of the *Adhishthanadhikarana*. Since the *Srenis* themselves were associated with the government machinery, they were morally bound to follow the rules and regulations of the state for their own corporations.^{23a} The law makers explicitly mention the control of the state over the *Srenis* (guilds). Yajnavalkya²⁴ says that the king should enforce the special rules and customs for guidance of the guilds. Narada²⁵ describes that the king should maintain the usages of the *Srenis* and other corporations. Whatever be their laws, their duties (religious), (the rules regarding their attendance) and the (particular mode of) livelihood prescribed for them, the king shall approve of²⁶. However, Brihaspati²⁷ states further that in case of

17. *JASB*, VII, pp. 993-94.

18. cf. *I. C. V*, pp. 110-11.

19. *Amarkosha of Amar Singh*, ed. by A. D. Sharma & N. G. Serdesai, Poona, 1941: *Amarkosha* mentions *Kula* meaning a family, *Amarkosha*, III. 3; *Mitakashara* records *Kula* court as consisting of relations near, distant, *Kulas* or joint families or often very extensive families, *Mitakashara on Yajnavalkya*, II, 30.

20. *Vyavaharamayukha*, p. 2.

21. *Brihaspati Smriti*, GOS LXXXV, ed., K. V. R. Aiyangar, Baroda, 1941, I, p. 92.

22. D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, Vol. I, from 6th century B. C. to 6th century A. D., Calcutta, 1965, pp. 291-92.

23. R. K. Choudhary, *Prachin Bhartiya Abhilekha*, Meerut, p. 87.

23a. Several seals discovered from Vaishali testify to the fact that the *Srenis* had formed federations like *Sresthi-kulikanigama*, *Sresthi-Sarthavaha-kulika nigama*, etc., *ASI, AR*, 1903-4, p. 110.

24. *Yajnavalkya Smriti*, ed., Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganpati Sastri, New Delhi, 1982, II, p. 192.

25. *Narada Smriti, SBE*, Vol. XXXIII, X. 2, 3. by J. Jolly, Oxford, 1889.

26. *Ibid.*, X, 6.

27. *Brihaspati*, I, pp. 28-30.

adjudication an appeal will be made to the *Sreni* court against the decision of the *Kula* (*Astakuladhikarana*) court. It appears that the *Srenis* (guilds) played significant role in judicial administration both in village and town level. These courts had their rules and regulations approved by the state which reveal the indirect control of the king over them.

(iii) **Panchamandali :**

The *Panchamandali* (Panchayat) was the next higher court in the village administration. The Sanchi Stone Inscription²⁸ of Chandragupta-II. (year 93) refers to the *Panchamandali* which consisted of five members like the modern *Panchayat*. The Baigram Copper Plate Inscription²⁹ further points out that the members of the council were also called *Samvyavaharinpramukha*. As already stated in the village administration, one of the chief duties of the *Panchamandali* was to settle disputes arising out of land transactions. It appears that the *Panchamandali* (Panchayat) was the highest body in judicial administration of the village. But it could only deal with the civil matters of the village during the period under review.

The fact is testified by the literary sources as well. For instance, Brihaspati records an appeal to the *Puga*³⁰ (Panchayat) court against the decision of the *Sreni* court. Like *Srenis* and *Kulas* there had been other courts³¹ such as *Naigama*, *Vrata*, *Pasanda*, *Gana*, *Gulma*, etc. The above groups filed their cases in their courts appointed by the king for further appeal. But these courts were only empowered to hear cases and give judgement in civil matters only.

II. Judicial Courts Established by the King

(i) **City Court :**

The inscriptions relating to the ancient India mention that the judicial system of the big cities--Pataliputra, Sampa, Taxila, etc., was well organised. The first Separate Rock Edict³² of the King Ashoka mentions that the *Nagalaviyohalika Mahamatra* who was incharge of the city in the administrative set-up also performed the duty of a city judicial officer. In the inscription Ashoka lays down the duties of the judicial officer as : "For the (the *Mahamatra* of Tosali) are occupied with many thousands of men.... All are my children. As on behalf of my own children, I desire that they may be proved with complete welfare and happiness in the world.... The same I desire also on behalf of (all) men." Thus It shows that although the city judicial officers possessed vast powers over many thousands of people, yet their first and foremost duty was to give justice according to *dharma* (law) in such a manner as to win the favour of the common people. It is also evident from the inscription that the judicial system of the ancient states of northern India had developed to a great extent. Despite all its handicaps, the judicial system had the main aim of furtherance of public welfare. But this was possible only with a justice loving king. The positive and the negative aspects of that judicial system could be assessed, depending

28. J. F. Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 29ff.

29. D. C. Sircar, *S. I.*, p. 356; *E. I.*, X, p. 49.

30. The *Puga* court consisted of members belonging to different castes and professions, but staying in the same village or town.

31. *Vyaharamayukha*, p. 5.

32. E. Hultzsch, pp. 92-97; *I. A.*, XIX, p. 82ff.

देवानपियस वचनेन तोसलियं महामात नगलवियोहलका वतविय ।

upon the quality and competence of the individual who ruled the state.

(ii) District Court :

If any person was dissatisfied with the decision of the lower court he could make an appeal for justice to the district court. The inscriptions contain references to the structure and administration of the judicial system at the district level also. Several inscriptions of King Ashoka frequently refer to *Rajjuka*, who, besides performing the duties of a District Officer, acted as a District Judge. In regard to the duties of *Rajjuka*, the Fourth Pillar Edict³³ says : "I have ordered that rewards or punishments are left to their discretion, in order that the *Rajjukas* should perform their duties confidently and fearlessly, that they should bestow welfare and happiness on the people of the country, and that they should confer benefits on them.... The *Rajjukas* must obey me. They will also obey the agents who know my wishes. In order that they should perform their duties properly, being fearless confident and unperturbed for the purpose (is essential), I have ordered that either rewards or punishments are left to the discretion of the *Rajjukas* (*Lajjukas*)."

The description of the inscription thus evidently shows that Ashoka had delegated full powers to the District judicial officers and made them virtual heads of the District judicial administration. These judicial officers were free to act, but of course, they were expected to follow the stipulated rules and regulations. They discharged their duties with self-confidence and without any fear of interference. In criminal justice they (*Rajjukas*) were also allowed to act as the final court of appeal, a position which the king enjoyed himself. Thus the district judicial administration in ancient northern India at that time was organised systematically. Vested with vast powers, these judges were directed to act impartially and fearlessly and in accordance with the wishes of the king.

Since the king wielded supreme power in all matters concerning his kingdom and since his word was law, the dispensing of justice in an impartial and fair way was possible only when he had his subjects' well-being upper-most in his mind and was free from the influence of the wicked and the corrupt among the courtiers. If the king suffered from incompetence, the whole system of justice suffered in consequence.

(iii) Divisional Court :

Next to the district, the division was the bigger and higher unit of the judicial administration. The head of the Division was *Uparika*. Only one inscription belonging to the Gupta period mentions divisional judicial system of that time. The Gunaighar Inscription³⁴ of Vainyagupta mentions that the *Panchadhikaranoparika* which consisted of five *Uparikas* (heads of the divisions) dealt with the law like the bench of justice of the modern times. In other words it can be said that those people who were dissatisfied with the decisions of the district judges could appeal to the Divisional Governor. From the same inscription, it is clear that the next to the division, there was a higher unit called *Panchadhikaranoparika* which had

33. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23; E. I., II, p. 251ff.

तेसं ये अभिहाले वा दंडे वा अतपतिये में कटे किति लज्जूका अस्वथ अभीता कंमानि पवतयेवू जनस जानपदसा हितसुखं उपदहेवू अनुगहिनेवु वा ।

34. *Panchadhikaranoparika* is interpreted by the scholars as 'President of the board of five (districts) court judges', *IHO*, No. I, p. 57.

jurisdiction over five divisions. The *Arthashastra*³⁵ testifies the fact that the Divisional Governor and the judicial officers jointly formed a bench of three for trying the offenders. Thus it shows that the modern judicial system of India had its roots in the ancient judiciary and imbibes in it several of its elements. The ancient divisional court can be understood as a seminal form of the modern High Court in India. As the modern high courts are answerable to the Apex Court in India, i.e., the Supreme Court, the divisional courts were answerable to the king, who was the fountain of all the powers or the king-in-council.

(iv) Provincial Court :

The bigger states like those of the Mauryas, Guptas, etc., had also a judicial net of administration at the provincial level. The First Separate Rock Edict of Ashoka³⁶ mentions : "From Ujjayini also the Prince (Provincial Governor) will send out for the purpose... a person (*Mahamatra*) of the same description and he will not allow (more than) three years to pass (without such a deputation). In the same way (an officer) will be deputed from Taxila also. When... these *Mahamatra* will set out on tour, then without neglecting their own duties, they will ascertain this as well, viz., whether the judicial officers are carrying out this also according to the instructions of the king (implies). Thus it seems that the provincial Governors being the representatives of the king exercised powers to depute a *Mahamatra* (who was senior in rank to the *Nagalaviyohalika Mahamatra* (the city judicial officer) whose duty was to inspect the functioning of the other judicial officers and he was to see whether or not they were working according to the desires of the king. In other words, the Governors of the provinces worked as the final judicial authority in the area under their jurisdiction.

The Provincial courts were found only in the states which were bigger in size because only divisional courts have been found in smaller states. Thus the Divisional courts of smaller states had status and powers equal to the Provincial courts of the bigger states. The Divisional or Provincial judges were directly answerable to the king. An appeal against the judgement of a Divisional or Provincial court could be preferred only before the king.

The study apparently shows that the judicial officers or judges as mentioned in the inscriptions are not fully borne out by the literary sources. We also find that the functions of *Rajjuka* (District officer), *Uparika* (Divisional governor) and the Provincial Governor were sometimes executive besides judicial. The literary sources provide detailed information regarding the different types of court, categories, constitution, jurisdiction, etc. Kautilya mentions territorial and sub-territorial courts such as *Sanghranas* (courts having jurisdiction over 10 villages), *Dronamukha* (courts having Jurisdiction over 400 villages), and *Sthaniya* (courts having jurisdiction over 800 villages). Kautilya³⁷ further categorizes as two types of law courts—the *Dharmasthiya* and the *Kantakashodhana*. The *Dharmasthiya* courts were constituted of three *Dharmasthas* (jurists capable of interpreting the sacred law) and three *Amatyas* (judges capable of administering the king's law, i.e., the law

35. *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, ed. & tr. by R. Shamasastary, Mysore, 1961, IV.1.

36. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 97; *IA*, XIX, p. 82 ff; *JRAS*, 1880 p. 379 ff.

37. *Kautilya Arthashastra*, ed. & tr. by R. P. Kangle, Bombay, 1963, III. I, III.1.

in force).³⁸ This type of courts dealt with the civil matters only. The second type of court *Kantakashodhana* were constituted of either three Pradeshts or three other *Amatyas* and they dealt with the criminal matters.³⁹ The main functions of these courts were to decide the cases which arose due to the violation of traditional rules and regulations.

Manu⁴⁰ mentions civil and criminal courts and suits decided by them. He elaborately describes 18 titles of law proceedings: 1. Non-payment of debt, 2. Deposits, 3. Sale by one who is not the owner, 4. Partnership deeds, 5. Resumption of given articles, 6. Non-payment of wages, 7. Breach of agreements, 8. Rescission of purchase and sale, 9. Dispute between the master and the servant, 10. Dispute over boundary, 11. Roughness of speech and body injury, 12. Violence, 13. Stealthiness, 14. Adultery, 15. Duties of a husband and a wife, 16. Partition, 17. Gambling with a dice and lifeless materials, 18. Betting carried on by employing living beings. Out of the above mentioned titles only four titles were considered for criminal cases : 1. Roughness of speech (defamation), 2. Body injury (assault and battery), 3. Violence (man killing) and 4. Adultery. The remaining 14 types of cases came under the civil jurisdiction. It reveals the importance of the criminal law during the Maurya period and the evolution of the civil law during the Gupta period when rules and regulations pertaining to civil matters referred to above were framed in details.

Brihaspati,⁴¹ however, states four kinds of judicial courts (1) *The Pratistha* (court established in a fixed place), (2) *Apratistha* (the roving court like Mayor's court of British time), (3) *Mudrita* (the court of a judge who is authorised to use royal seal and (4) *Sasita* or *Sastrita* (the court over which the king himself presided).

It appears further that in ancient India, the executive officers besides their administrative responsibilities also discharged judicial duties. That appear to have been aimed at better co-ordination between the judiciary and the general administration and also to effect economy in the State expenditure during the period. In order to maintain efficiency in judiciary, there had been mobile courts which moved from place to place under their jurisdiction to dispose of the suits quickly. There were various gradations among judges and those who were empowered to use the royal seal appeared to belong to a higher class. The formation of the courts depended upon the type of jurisdiction as has been in the ancient Indian judicial system.

(v) King's Court

The king was the final court of appeal in northern part of the ancient India. The First Separate Rock Edict of Ashoka⁴² reveals : "It happens in the administration

38. *Ibid.*; Seals discovered from Nalanda and Vaisali indicate that *Dharmadhikara*, the court of law and *Dharmasandhikarinya* (*ASI, AR, 1913-14, p. 128, E.I., XI, pp. 107, 265, Manu VII.1 & 23 and Narada, 1. 34, refer to the courts Dharmadhikarana, Dharmasthana and Dharmasasna*; Kalidasa mentions the courts as *Dharmasasna* (*Malvikagnimitram, V. 133*).

39. *AS, IV. 1.*

40. *Manu, i. 47; Vyavaharamayukha, p.2.*

41. *SBE, XXXIII, p. 277.*

42. E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-97; *IA, XIX, p. 82 ff.*

नितियं एकपुलिसे अयि ये बंधन वा पलिकिले सं का पापुनाति । तत होति अक्समातेव बधनतिक अने च बहु जने दविये दुखियते ॥

of justice that a single person suffers either imprisonment or harsh treatment. In this case an order cancelling the imprisonment is obtained by him accidentally, while many other people continue to suffer." It appears that the justice was not within the reach of every person and the resourceful persons could appeal to the king (who was the final court in judicial system) while the others suffered from severe handicap or disability for being poor and unresourceful.

The contemporary literature also presents the king as the final appellate authority in judicial administration.⁴³ Kautilya⁴⁴ mentions that the king, according to the prescribed time-table, was required to spend, every day, about a couple of hours in adjudication. Though he (the king) could entertain any suit, in actual practice, due to the shortage of time, most of the cases were entrusted to the judicial officers for quick disposal. Manu⁴⁵ says where the king is not in a position to see the whole proceedings of the case personally, he should appoint a learned person to execute the duties of the king or the judge. The learned person must enter the court alongwith three other courtiers to hear the cases. Nilkantha⁴⁶ in *Vyavaharamayukha* quotes Brihaspati who recommends that the number of the courtiers can be three or five or seven. *Pradvivak*, *Amatya*, *Ganak* and *Lekhak* were the other important persons at the jury. *Ganak* was meant to count the money and *Lekhak* (scribe) to note down the decisions taken by the *Sresthins* and *Vanij* could be the audience.⁴⁷

Narada⁴⁸ states that the king was the highest court of appeal. The Smriti writer records how an appeal was possible to the city court's decision and how a litigant could file an appeal to the king against the decree of the city court. But there was no court of appeal above the decision pronounced by the king. The king was, however, expected to discharge his judicial duties according to the verdicts of the *Srutis* and *Smritis*. Brihaspati⁴⁹ further adds that the law is supreme and the king of kings. The king, therefore, could not set the law aside.

Nilkantha⁵⁰ gives some details of judicial system in ancient India. He says that the king was the fountain of justice. Next to him was the judge appointed by him. After him came the *Puga* (a body like *Panchayat*), then a *Sreni* (guild) of persons belonging to the same caste and pursuing the same occupation, then the *kula*, the kindred of the parties. One could first appeal to one's kindred in the first instance. Then he could proceed to the *Srenis* (guilds) to which he belonged, then to the whole village *Panchayat*. If even after that he was dissatisfied, he could proceed to

43. AS, III.1. (The *Arthashastra* regards the king as *Dharmapravartaka* which literally mean the patron of the law or judiciary.)

44. AS, I. 19.

45. Manu, BK-VIII,

46. *Vyavaharamayukha*, p.4.

47. *Vyavaharamayukha*, p.5. The king and chief justice could not begin with the trial of a case, if they were not assisted by a panel of jurors. The jurors were not only expected to be impartial but also well grounded in the law (*Yajnavalkya*, II. 2.). They were to be fearless exponents. It was their duty to restrain a wilful king from going astray and giving a wrong decision, *Sukra* IV. II.2.

48. Narada, I, 307.

49. Brihaspati Up, 1.4.14.

50. *Vyavaharamayukha*, pp. 3-5.

the district court appointed by the king. The king could give the last hearing, being the highest court of appeal.

Qualifications for Judges :

The inscriptions yield enough information regarding the requisite qualifications of the judges. The First Separate Rock Edict of Ashoka⁵¹ (Dhauili and Jaugada) mentions the qualities of mind which a judge ought to possess, the most important being equanimity of thought and temper. It says that the justice should act impartially and without envy, anger, cruelty, hurry, laziness and fatigue. The edict frequently instructs the judicial officers of the city that it is their duty to see that such negative dispositions should not arise in them and the justice is done without loss of time and without prejudice. In Fourth Pillar Edict⁵² Ashoka again orders the *Rajjuka* to perform justice fearlessly, confidently and for the welfare and happiness of the people so that more and more benefits are conferred upon them. It shows that those people who were endowed with truth, straight-forwardness, prudence, sweetness, desire for the welfare of all mankind and were capable both in the lawful acquisition of wealth, and the preservation of it were appointed as judges so that impartiality in judgements could be maintained.

It appears from the inscriptions that when the judges became harsh and cruel to the people they were checked by the higher officers. In First Separate Rock Edict⁵³ Ashoka reiterates : "For the following purpose has this rescript been written here, viz., in order that the judicial officers of the city may strive at all times (for this) that neither undeserved fettering nor undeserved harsh treatment is happening to men. And for the following purpose I shall send out every five years, a *Mahamatra* who will be neither harsh nor fierce but of gentle actions, viz., in order to ascertain whether judicial officers are paying attention to this object."

It is apparent from the inscriptions that the judges sometimes did not perform their duties well and became harsh and cruel to the people and thus in order to stop the harshness of the judicial officers *Mahamatras* were appointed by the king who were neither harsh nor fierce but were possessed of gentleness. Their duty was to check the functioning of the judicial officers whether or not they were complying with the instructions of the king for the welfare and upliftment of the people. The contemporary literary sources give an objective and detailed information in regard to the qualities of a judge. Manu⁵⁴ mentions that the king should appoint a learned *Brahmana* as a judge to investigate suits. He adds that the *Vedas*, the *Smritis*, the customs of holymen and one's own inclination are the four sources of law. While trying a case, he should act in co-operation with the jurors who are to be not only impartial but well versed in the law. According to Yajnavalkya⁵⁵, a learned *Brahmana* should be preferred to the post of a judge called *Pradvivaka*. But Katyayana⁵⁶ mentions elaborately that a judge should possess certain qualifications : Born of a

51. E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-97; IA, XIX, p. 82 ff.

तत् इच्छितविये तुफेहि किंति मझ पटिपादयेमाति । इमेहि चु जातेहि नो संपाटय जति इसाय आमलोपेन
नितलियेन तूलनाय अनावूतिय आलिसियेन किलम हीन ।

52. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-97.

54. *Manu*, VIII, 20.

55. *Yajnavalkya*, II.3.

56. *Katyayana, Smriti* on Vyavahara, Law and Procedure with reconstructed text and translation, ed., by P.V. Kane, Bombay, 1933.

noble family, self controlled, not repellant, steady, afraid of the world hereafter, religious, assiduous and free from temper. He further insists that judges generally be appointed from the *Brahmanas* community. However, in the absence of suitable *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas* who are fully expert in the *Dharmasastras*, may be offered such posts. Narada⁵⁷ says that a judge should have a thorough knowledge of the eighteen titles of law and their 8000 sub-heads and should be well versed in the *Vedas*, *Smritis* and *Anviksiki*. Just as a physician takes out from the body an iron dart by making a surgical operation, so a judge should extricate from a law suit the deceit, underlying it. He also insists on the unanimity of opinions by judges and jurors for, according to him a unanimous decision leaves no grievance. In case of the functioning of the judges Kautilya⁵⁸ mentions that if the judge threatens, upbraids, drives away or browbeats a litigant, he should be imposed the lowest fine for violence and double in case of verbal injury. If he (the judge) does not question one who ought to be questioned, questions one who ought not to be questioned or after questioning dismisses the statement or instructs, reminds or prompts him, he should be liable to the imposition of the middle fine for violence. If he does not ask for evidence, dismisses it under a pretext, carries away one tired with delays throws out of context a statement which otherwise is in proper order, gives to witness a help in his statement or takes up once again a case which is completed and in which judgement has been pronounced, he should be liable to pay the highest fine for violence.

It appears that despite better organisation of the courts, the common people were not given the representation in the judicial administration. The selection of the judges or the judicial officers was based on nobility and high castes which implies that belonging to the high class was considered an essential qualification for the appointment in the administrative system. The oppressed classes, i. e., the Shudras and the other lower classes as well as the women, therefore, stood little chances for justice.

(B) Modes of crime and punishment :

A crime is regarded as an act of wilful omission and commission involving law and is liable for punishment. The inscriptions of the ancient India depict several modes of crimes and punishments prevailing during the period. The inscriptions of King Ashoka reveal three types of punishment, viz., (i) Imprisonment, (ii) death sentence and (iii) light punishments.

(i) Imprisonment :

Imprisonment as punishment existed in ancient India. The First Separate Rock Edict of Ashoka⁵⁹ mentions that the city judges (*Naglavivohalika*) were strictly instructed by him that their first and foremost endeavour should be to put restriction on man's liberty in jails. In the Fifth Rock Edict⁶⁰, Ashoka states that he has appointed

57. Narada, III. 17.

58. A.S., IV.9.

59. E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-93, *IA.*, XIX, p. 82 ff.

60. *Ibid.*, p.33.

तेदस वसाभिसितेन ममया धंम महामाता कय । भट्ट भयेसु वमानिभेसु अनदेसु बुधेसु हिदसुखाये धंमयुताये अपलिबोधाये वियपय ते ।

the *Mahamatra*⁶¹ of morality for the welfare and happiness of prisoners. They were to provide the prisoners with money to pay the ransom, and to see them released, especially in case of such prisoners as were minors, or were tools, or burdened with the maintenance of family, or entitled to consideration by reason of their good conduct or age. It reveals that during the period the criminals in imprisonment were punished and tortured severely to extract the truth. The king therefore, desired improvement in jail administration. It appears that surprise invigilation by a touring *Mahamatra*, one of the justice in the provincial courts which Ashoka refers to in the Separate Rock Edict of Kalinga, had a very important effect on the prison administrative system. The worthwhile thing is that the *Dharma Mahamatra*, a high level central officer, was authorised not only to set right the violation of justice by freeing a person from fetters but also to temper justice with mercy by making money grants for the maintenance of a prisoner's family or even by releasing the prisoner if he bore a good conduct or he is not fit to be confined in a prison.

The prisoners were released on certain occasions. The Fifth Pillar Edict⁶² of Ashoka mentions that during his reign of 26 years, he has made 25 deliveries of prisoners. The inscription points out further that on the *Tishya* and *Punarvasu* days, the first eight, fourteenth and fifteenth days of the lunar half month, the first full moon day in each of the three seasons, the first half month during the Indian Lent and on other auspicious days, the prisoners were released from jails.⁶³ The important fact is that even the killing of certain animals⁶⁴ for eating meat was strictly restricted by the king on those days. The evidence reveals the concern of the king towards reformation of the offenders as well as his kindness to protect the lives of the animals. It points out further that the practice of releasing prisoners from jails on certain occasions still in vogue appears to be the result of the ancient traditions. Through this practice, the offenders in the modern period too are provided an

61. Besides *Dharma Mahamatra*, there were different types of *Mahamatras* in Maurya administration. The First Separate Rock Edict mentions *Nagravyavaharaka Mahamatra* (*Mahamatras* working as city judge), E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-97. The First pillar Edict refers to *Anta Mahamatra* (*Mahamatras* safeguarding at the borders), E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, p. 120.; In the First Separate Rock Edict the *Mahamatras* are also mentioned to be sent on tours of inspection to inspect the work of magistrates and judicial officers, E. Hultzsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-97; The same inscription also reveals that they were sent both by the centre and the provincial governor. The Queen Edict, which refers to the *Mahamatras* everywhere i. e., to those of all districts, testifies the fact that they could be posted in the districts, E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. xi and 159. The Twelve Rock Edict delineates *Ithi Jhakha-Mahamatras*, who controlled the department of the women, E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 43. Besides the Sixth Rock Edict of King Ashoka mentions Council of *Mahamatras* (Council of Ministers) whose main duty was to sort out a dispute arises regarding donation or proclamation of king or an emergent matter in the absence of the king, E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. xi and 13.

In Buddhist literature also the *Mahamatras* are mentioned as ministers. *Jataka* 11, p. 59, *Mahavaga*, I, pp. xi and 13. 90, 3, etc. However, in Ashoka's inscription it has wider meaning i. e. official or dignitary, E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

62. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53; E. I. II, p. 256 ff.

63. *Ibid.*

64. In the said inscription Ashoka instructs that the fish, bulls, he-goats, rams, bears, horses, bullocks and other animals must not be castrated on the days of the *Tishya* full moon days: the fourteenth, the fifteenth and the first (*tithi*) and the eighth of every fortnight, *Punarvasu*, on the three *Chaturmases*, on the festivals etc.

opportunity to reform and rehabilitate themselves. The fact is testified by the contemporary literary sources as well. In *Arthashastra*,⁶⁵ Kautilya lays down several rules regulations to be observed in prisons. He instructs the Superintendent of jails that no obstruction should be caused to any prisoner in his daily avocations as sleeping, sitting, eating or replying to the call of nature. No person should be put in the lock up without the declaration of the grounds of provocation. The prisoners should not be subjected to torture or deprived of food and drink. They must not be beaten to death, unnecessarily harassed or molested. Kautilya further states that in the case of women particular care must be taken to see that no rape is committed either in the lock up or within the prison. The criminals condemned to death were put in the prison till execution. He also specifies rules for the release of prisoners. In *Arthashastra*⁶⁶ he writes that once in a day, or once in five nights, the jails might be emptied of prisoners in consideration of the work they have done or of whipping inflicted upon them, or if an adequate ransom is paid by them in gold. Whenever a country is conquered, when an heir apparent is installed on the throne, or when he begets a prince, the prisoners should be set free. Kautilya specifically says that on the days to which the birth-star of the king is assigned, as well as on full moon days, such prisoners as are young, old, diseased or helpless should be let out from the jail (*bandenagraha*) or those who are of charitable disposition or who have made any agreement with the prisoners may be liberated on payment of an adequate ransom.⁶⁷

The *Smriti* writers also recommend immunity from imprisonment for some type of offenders. Yajnavalkya writes that an old man (over eighty), a boy (below sixteen), women and persons suffering from diseases be given half of the prescribed *Prayascita* (punishment). Likewise a child less than five commits no crime nor sin by any act and was not to suffer any punishment as undergo a *Prayascita* (punishment).⁶⁸

(ii) Death Sentence :

The death sentence was the extreme type of punishment in ancient India. It is evident from the Fifth Pillar Edict⁶⁹ of Ashoka, in which he instructs his judicial officers as well the relatives of the guilty : "My order reaches even so far (that) a respite of three days is granted by me to persons lying in prison on whom punishment has been passed, (and) who have been condemned to death. (In this way) either their relatives will persuade those (*Lajjukas*) to grant their life, or if there is none who persuades (them), they will bestow gifts or will under-go fasts in order to (attain happiness) in the other (world). For my desire is thus, that, even when the time (of respite) has expired, they should attain (happiness) in the other world." This inscription clearly records a spectacular rule that before affecting the execution, a three day respite (time for appeal) was granted to the accused in order to prepare the accused himself for execution or to review the judgement by the judges or by the king. But the said inscription also points out that those persons who had an

65. A. S., IV. 9.

66. *Ibid.*, II. 36.

67. *Ibid.*, II. 36.

68. *Mitakshara* on Yajnavalkya, II, 243.

69. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23; E. I. II, p. 256ff.

अब इते पिच में आवुति बंधन वधानं मुनि सानं लीलित दंडान परवधानं तिनि दिवसानि में योते दिने।

approach in the administration or who were possessed with money could only make an appeal in order to review the judgement of death sentence. This practice testifies to a well developed judicial system in ancient India. It also shows that the practice of allowing respite as it exists now as a basis of adequate opportunity to appeal has its roots in the fundamental judicial framework provided by the ancient kings.

Although the inscriptional sources do not clearly mention the mode of execution, yet the contemporary literature describes that death was executed by burning alive, drowning, physical torture, etc. depending upon the circumstances of the case. The *Arthashastra*⁷⁰ mentions that any person who aims at the kingdom, who forces entrance into the king's harem, who instigates the wild tribes or the enemies (against the king), or who creates dissatisfaction in forts, parts of the country, or in the army, should be burnt alive from head to feet. It further specifies that if a *Brahamana* does similar acts, he should be given death sentence by drowning.⁷¹ Kautilya prescribes that any person who murders his father, mother, son, brother, teacher, or an ascetic, should be put to death by burning both his head and skin.⁷² He further declares that those offenders who are not cruel should be given peaceful death.⁷³ If an offender kept in the lock up, commits rape with an *arya* woman in the lock-up, he should be condemned to death in that very place⁷⁴ (by torture). An officer who causes a prisoner to escape from a lock-up after breaking it open should be condemned to death and his property confiscated.⁷⁵

*Manu*⁷⁶ mentions that if a low caste person indulges in sexual relations with a woman of a higher caste (whether with or without her consent) or kidnaps a maiden, he should be given the death sentence. A man who causes a break in the embankment of a lake may be given death punishment by drowning. *Brihaspati*⁷⁷ strongly remarks that when several persons assault a person and kill him, a death penalty should be inflicted upon by them or the one who strikes a fatal blow. The aiders and abettors should be punished half as much. Yajnavalkya⁷⁸ lays down death by being gored by the bulls for a woman who is guilty of poisoning or who is guilty of incendiarism or who kills her husband, elders or her own child. He also prescribes death by being burnt with the fire of straw for those who set fire to the growing crops, houses, forests, village pastures and threshing floors or who approach the queen.⁷⁹

(iii) Light Punishments :

Besides the imprisonment and death sentence, some light punishments were

70. A. S. IV. 11.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.* Here Kautilya clearly states the concept of menseria (doing the crime willingly or unwillingly). According to his view, those persons who do not have guilty intentions should be awarded the lesser punishment than prescribed.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Manu*, IX, 279; VIII. 20.

77. *Brihaspati*, XXII, 31, 33.

78. *Yajnavalkya*, II. 279.

79. *Ibid.*, 202.

also awarded to the offenders in ancient India. The Thirteenth Rock Edict of Ashoka⁸⁰ reveals, "The literary sources mention the prevalence of light punishments during the period. Kautilya says if the goldsmith purchases the golden articles from a thief, he should be fined 48 panas. If the examiner of coins declares an unacceptable current coin to be worthy of being entered into the treasury or rejects an acceptable current coin, he should be fined 12 panas. If a person causes a counterfeit coin to be manufactured, or accepts it, or exchanges it, he should be fined 1000 panas.⁸¹ If a merchant conspires either to prevent the sale of merchandise or to sell or purchase commodities at higher prices he should be fined 1000 panas.⁸² Kautilya describes further that if the Superintendent of jails subjects any person to an unjust torture, he should be fined 48 panas. If he beats a prisoner to death, he should be fined 1000 panas.⁸³ If a woman abets a man in having an intercourse with a maiden against her will, she should not only pay a fine of 100 panas, but also appease the maiden paying to her an adequate nuptial fee.⁸⁴ In some cases Kautilya lays down punishment by cutting of limbs. He mentions that if a person insults his father, son, brother, teacher or an ascetic, his tongue should be cut off, and if he bites any of limbs of these persons, he should also be deprived of the corresponding limb.⁸⁵ If a man castrates a man, he should have his generative organ cut off.⁸⁶ So it appears that several types of light punishments existed in northern states of ancient India. However, the award of the punishment solely depended on the nature of crime.

The inscriptions of Ashoka repeatedly mention the need and value of objectivity in the judicial proceedings. In the Fourth Pillar Edict⁸⁷ Ashoka instructs the judicial officers that there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishment. Such repeated statements of the king reveal that justice in those days was not awarded impartially to the people. This contention is testified by the contemporary literary sources which on the contrary points out that the law in ancient India was full of discrimination. As a matter of fact, the *Dharmasastras* mention that the punishment for the murder of a *Brahmana* was his losing a thousand cows, for that of a *Kshatriya* five hundred cows, for that of a *Vaisya* one hundred cows, for that of a *Shudra* only ten cows. *Manu* also recommends that if a member of the lowest *Varna* caused any harm to any limb of the body of the member of a higher *Varna*, then the corresponding limb of the accused should be amputated.⁸⁸ If a *Brahmana* abused a *Kshatriya* or a *Vaisya* or a *Shudra*, he was imposed a fine of 50 or 25 or 12 panas respectively. But if the case was reverse, i. e., if a *Kshatriya* or *Vaisya* or a *Shudra* abused a *Brahmana* the fine imposed was much higher if the accused was a *Shudra*. This was in addition to the

80. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67; *E. I.*, II, p. 246 ff.

81. *A. S.*, IV. 1.

82. *A. S.*, IV. 2. (It reveals that the Consumer Protection Act of modern India has its roots in ancient Indian judicial system).

83. *A. S.*, IV. 9.

84. *Ibid.*, IV. 12.

85. *Ibid.*, IV. 11.

86. *Ibid.*

87. E. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 122-123; *E. I.* II, p. 251 ff.

इच्छिवे हि एसा किति वियोहाल समता च सिच दंडसमता च।

88. *Manu*, VIII, 279, *Gautama Dharam Sutra*, XII. 1.

physical punishment.⁸⁹ If a *Shudra* was found guilty of adultery with a female of the higher *Varna*, he could be put to death.⁹⁰ And further while the members of the other *Varnas*, i. e., *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Shudras*, got various decrees of corporal punishments, the *Brahmanas* were made immune from these.⁹¹

Thus it is evident that the ancient Indian law was full of discrimination as justice was done in accordance with the caste consideration while the members of the lower *Varnas*, i. e., the *Vaisyas* and *Shudras* got various kinds of rigorous punishments, the *Brahmanas* were either totally immune or got just symbolic punishments. The study therefore, points out that adjudication of justice, despite its being based on sound organisation was rooted in caste and status. It was, in fact, most discriminatory and partial, especially against the *Shudras*. It appears that all the subjects were not equal in the eyes of the law and a differential treatment was given to the people during the period under study.

Notwithstanding the changes in the structure of the judicial administration the ancient states of northern India are characterised by certain progressive shifts in judicial system. First, the introduction of the mobile courts led to an easy accessibility to a court of law and prompt disposal of disputes and economy in terms of time and expenses. Secondly, there was a sudden elevation of the village administration to a high position of judicial authority the local elements, viz., *Kula* (*Astakuladhikarana*), *Srenis* (guilds), *Panchamandali* (*Panchayat*) started playing an important part in the administration of law and justice during the Gupta period. While the criminal law was important during the Maurya period, the civil law evolved during the Gupta period and the State framed several rules and regulations pertaining to the boundary disputes, non-payment of debt, mortgage of land, partition, deposits, etc. Thirdly, certain laws and traditions of the ancient judicial system, e. g. the release of prisoners on certain occasions, the reformation of the offenders, the review of the judgement, the practice of allowing respite to the defendants for appeal before affecting the executions, the concept of *menseria* (intentionally or unintentionally doing the crime), the control on certain commodities by the State (Consumer Protection Act of ancient period), etc. appear to be more or less the essentials of the Indian Judiciary of the modern time.

89. *Gautama Dharam Sutra*, XII. 11. 3.

90. *Yajnavalkya*, II. 286.

91. *Brihaspati*, *SBE*, XXXIII, 333.

TRACES OF FEUDALISM AS SEEN IN THE NIRMAND COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION OF C. a. 612-13 A. D.

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Feudalism arose from the ashes of the world of antiquity and the crumbling primitive communal society, elements of which served as the building materials for the new economic and cultural system. Feudalism is yet another point in question now a days, which needs special attention of the scholars. An accurate definition of the term "Feudalism" is practically impossible because feudal usages often varied not only from country to country but from ruler to ruler and from period to period. It would be inaccurate to limit its implications to politics, economic and social institutions, for all institutions were embraced in its totality. Since the feudal institutional range was so inclusive and at the same time so divergent, it eludes systematic definition. There are as many definitions of the term "Feudalism" as there are scholars who have already worked or still working on this subject. Thus, only arbitrary definition is possible of this term.

However, to some scholars, this term appears to be anathema. For them feudalism is a foreign concept and by no way relevant and applicable to Indian situation. It was unnecessarily imported into India for no cause. They draw their references from the European social model and history which is they called feudalism and denied similar institution in Indian history.

Our effort here is to display the traces of feudalism in Nirmand Copper Plate Inscription of *mahasamanta* and Maharaja Samudrasena in early Punjab. We all agree that Indian feudalism cannot be a replica of western feudal system and cannot be taken as such. European feudalism originated grew and got maturity in an entirely distinct socio-economic and political milieu and its geographical factors shaped its social structure and India's had its own. We find a number of inscriptions in early India which reflect the traces of feudalism,¹ but, here we are taking up single Copper Plate Inscription of early Punjab for study. Land was fundamental feature of feudalism in early India. It played very important and crucial role in socio-economic and political formation of early India. The state controlled economy, through the issuance of land grant which generated a landed aristocracy; it is supposed to have brought about the fragmentation of political power, reduced the peasantry to bondage and subjection and degraded the artisans.

Land grant was an important adjunct of feudal system. It was common in early India that the plots of lands were granted to *Brāhmaṇas* and religious establishments. Many Inscriptions record land grant which had been donated to *Brāhmaṇa* and

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1. J. A. S. Burgess (ed.), *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1894, pp. 482-83; and *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers Chamba* by T. S. Negi, Batala, 1963, pp. 113-114.

temples by the kings or rulers for secular and religious purposes. Sometimes land grant was made by the ruler as a *dāna* (pious gifts) and donors wanted *Punya* out of the *Bhudāna* (land gifts). But with the passage of time the concept of land grant got changed and was made for secular or other purposes or in lieu of cash salary for state services.

The intention behind the land grant by the ruler or king may be surmised as under that the purpose of land grant to *Brāhmanas* and religious establishment by the ruler to increase religious merit. The income from such grant was utilised to meet the expenses of maintaining the temples and accessories required for worshiping gods and goddesses. The accessories can be enumerated as *bali* (flower, sandal paste), *chāru* rice and *sattas*, (alm-houses), perfumes, incense, garlands and lamp. However, the concept of land grant was changed with the passage of time. Now income from donated land might have been used for secular purpose. The privately organised production system of the village units allowed a lesser surplus to pass on to the state which drastically diminished its size and resources on account of persistent land grant, with the result that it had become impossible for the state to keep a standing and paid army, and an elaborate salaried bureaucracy. R.S. Sharma is of the opinion that there were economic crises after 5th century A.D. in India and disruption of overseas trade with Rome and other countries in the post-Gupta period created an acute scarcity of coins and religious endowments which were made in cash by the princes and individuals in the first two centuries of the Christian era were now partly replaced by the grant of land.² It seems that scarcity of coins must be the one of the main factors of the land grant. Sharma further argues that the land grants are noticed in such places where the circulation of coins were either minimal or absent. This argument although had relevance but we cannot say emphatically that it was because of absence of coins that land was granted. It may be owing to the desire of the ruler to bring more and more land under cultivation through donees.

Generally, the two kinds of lands were donated to the Brahmanas and temples in lieu of services to the state e.g. pasture or barren land and land lying in the out-lying region of the state. The purpose behind the grant of land may be many: the ruler might have sincerely desired to bring uncultivable land under cultivation, secondly by granting the land in the far flung areas where the royal authority was little felt by the people. Thus, the king could exert its influence in such an area where the people were oblivious of central authority prior to the grant was effected.

Here we are taking up an inscription of early India which reflects some traces of feudalism. Nirmand Copper-Plate Inscription of the Mahasamanta and Maharaja Samudrasena appears to have been discovered by General Cunningham, but it has been known to him since 1847. It was not brought to notice till 1879 when Major W.R.M. Holroyd, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, obtained and forwarded the Plate on which it is engraved.³ Rajendralala Mitra published his reading of the text, and a translation of it in the *Journal of Bengal Asiatic Society*.⁴

2. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, 2nd edition, Delhi, 1980, pp. 52-53.

3. K. K. Thaplyal, *Inscription of the Maukariyas, Later Guptas, Puspabhutis and Yasovarman of Kanauj*, I.C.H.R., Delhi, 1988, pp. 152-53; J.F. Fleet (ed.), *Corpus Inscription indicarum*, Vol. III, Varanasi, 1969, No. 80, Plate X, p. 286.

4. *Journal of Bengal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XL VIII, p. 212.

The Inscription was, therefore, critically edited by J.F. Fleet in *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Volume III, 1888, pp. 286-291, and his treatment has remained the standard version.⁵ The Inscription is on a copper-plate, which belongs to a temple of the god Parasurama at the village named Nirmand. J.F. Fleet obtained the original plate, for examination, through the kindness of L.W. Dana.⁶ The village Nirmand is situated near the right bank of the Satluj river, twenty-one miles north-east of Plach, the chief town of the Plach tehsil of sub-division of the Kullu Division of the Kangra District of early Punjab, now, it is in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. The language is Sanskrit, and except for the benedictive and imprecatory verses in lines 12 to 14, the Inscription is in prose throughout.⁷

The importance of this Inscription lies in the fact that it refers to Mahasamanta and Maharaja Samudrasena. From the assumption of the titles of Mahasamanta and Maharaja, Samudrasena must have been a ruler of Sena dynasty. Its date, in numerical symbols, is the year six, and the eleventh solar day of the Vaisakha (April-May). But there is nothing to indicate any particular era to which the date should be referred. From the palaeographical point of view, this Inscription can be assigned to about the 612-13 A.D.⁸ and this date is supported by J.F. Fleet, on the alike feature appear, in some of earlier Inscriptions like the Arang grant of the Raja Maha Jyaraja, the Raypur grant of the Raja Maha Sudevaraja and the Chammah and Siwani grant of the Maharaja Pravasena II.⁹

This Inscription records a grant of the village of Sūlisagrama by Mahasamanta and Māharāja Samudrasēna, to a body of Brāhmana who studied *Atharva-Veda* at the *agrahara* of Nirmand, for the purposes of the god Tripurantaka or Siva, who under the name of *Mihirosvara*, had been installed by his mother Mihiralakshmi at a previously established temple of the same god under the name of *Kapalesvara*.¹⁰ The grant was made free from all immunities, for the establishment of *bali*, *charu*, *sattara* etc., and for the supply of the materials for daily worship of the god.¹¹ The grant was made perpetually. This Inscription tells us that grant was made to the donees, together with the level and marsh and forest land; together with the inhabitants; with the *udraṅga*; (and) including all its boundaries, grass, timber and springs, etc.¹² This shows that the grant was made alongwith the inhabitants and

5. J.F. Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

9. *Ibid.*, J. F. Fleet, supported 612-13 A. D. the date of Nirmand Copper Plate Inscription of Mahasamanta and Maharaja Samundrasena, on the basis of some earlier grants, in C. I. I. III such as No. 40, p. 191, No. 41, p. 196, Nos. 55, 56, pp. 235, 243.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

"Mahasamanta maharaja-sri samundrasena janani-sri-Mihiralakshmya dharm arttam bhagavatas-Tripurantakasya lok aloka karasya pranat-anukampinas-sarvva-duhkha-kshaya-karo kapale-svare janani-Pratishthitasya' sri-Mihiresvarasya kapalisvara-vva-(b) li-charu-sattra sray-dhupa-danaya-satatam Sirnna-khanda-Sphutita-Sadhanaya-Cha.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 289, lines 8 to 10 "Nirmand-agrahara Alaryvana-Vra (brahmana)... dvesa-bhumi-paryanta paribhuta-namma Phakkas-cha dvesa-bhumi-sodraṅga sa-sim-anta-paryanta-sa-prativasi-jana-sametams-odraṅgam-sva-sima-trina-kashtha-devagrhartven-a-cha.

they seem to be attached to the soil, but not in the same sense as was in Europe. R.S. Sharma argues that "the earliest grant which unequivocally transfers the villagers to grantees is that of a feudatory ruler called the *Mahasamanta* and *Maharaja* Samudrasena of 7th century A.D.". According to it a village in the Kangra area is made over to the grantees with its inhabitants.¹³ Thus, the inscription reflects that Kangra in early Punjab (Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh) had experienced serfdom during the 7th century A. D. It is mentioned in the record that grant was made as perpetually and if somebody in future cause any obstruction or try to confiscate, it shall become invested with (the guilt of) the five great sins and the minor sins¹⁴. Although the *agrahara* of Nirmand was donated to the donees on the permanent basis, "for as long as sun and the moon should shine" and that all those should encroach upon such land were held accursed, it was not infrequent historical fact, especially during the troubled times of dynastic change or conquest, that the estates not only of the lay feudal lords but also the Brahmin communes and temples were confiscated by the state or ruler. Therefore, the relationship between the king and private feudal property was continually changing.¹⁵ Thus we notice that donor solemn injunction to the members of his family and feudatories were made of sure that in future no obstruction would be caused to them in so far as the enjoyment to the land was concerned. The land was declared to enjoyable by the donee by his posterities perpetually with all type of immunities. The house holders headed by the Brahmanas and artisans or are ordered to pay the donee. Now they used to pay all dues and revenues to the donee, in the place of state or ruler, which resulted with the drastic loss of revenue to the state exchequer.

Another trace of feudalism is seen in lines nos 1-2 of the same record. The name of the ruler *Mahasamanta* and *Maharaja Varunasena* is recorded and described as the overlord of suzerain, many feudal lords were under him. He is described as the famous ruler, and whose fame stretched out over the four oceans; the waterlilies of whose feet were covered over with the rays of the jewels in the bowed down *tiaras* on the heads of many feudal chiefs; (and) celebrated many sacrifices.¹⁶

Thus we notice that the Brahmanas were very influential and occupied higher status in the early Indian Society because of their accessibility to learning and an account of their right to officiating at sacrifices and rituals performed by the rulers and wealthy class. The grant of land to Brahmanas were made for the doner and his relatives. But they resulted in the colonization of fertile and arable tracts of land by Brahmana. The Brahmanas, as the highest representatives of an agrarian society, were best suited for the purpose. The operation followed, as a matter of necessity,

13. R. S. Sharma, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

14. J. F. Fleet, *op.cit.*, p. 289.

ndr-atkha-tara-Samakalinam pratipadayati-smal Vitudaitad-rajabhis-tad-asri-srijajanen-adhikrit-anadhikritena hitam-ichchhata pratipalanivyayo-nyatha kuryat paripanthanam—apaha.

15. Barry Jones (tr), *Feudal Society and Its Culture*, Moscow, 1988, p. 245.

16. *Ibid.* "---- bhikhyata—narapati—jas sambhavach—chatur Udadhi—samatikkranta—kirttir—aneka—samant ottamang—auanata—mukuta—mani—mayukha—vichchhurita—charanaravinda—Vugalah—Kratu—vaji—mahasamanta maharaja—Sri—Varunasena—Tasya putras—tat—pad—anudhyatah putras—tat—paramedevyapm—prava (ba)—lika—bhat (t) arikayam—utpannah—pittr—aiva—tulyo gunair—mma.....*Ibid.*, p. 288.

from the need for greater food-production to supplement an inadequate supply for an ever increasing population.¹⁷ With the passage of time Brahmanas started using even religious grants for secular or other purposes. They received, sometime whole village famous by the term *agrahara*. The land not only increased their economic status but also gave them administrative authority over such *agraharas*.

The revenue of the concerned land was utilised by the donee, even ruler transferred to the (Brahmanas) donee his right over the water resources.¹⁸ Thus this record indicates that irrigation had become a local responsibility. It seems that the body of Brahmanas had become economically very sound might have become landed intermediaries between the ruler and the actual tiller of the land and inhabitants in their turn must have become the dependent on them. The ruler was not to enjoy its right over the donated Nirmand *agrahara*. The Brahmanas seem to be now its real owners as a consequence the inhabitants too owned their allegiance to the (Brahmanas) donees. As a result of these changes in the land system in Kangra (Kullu District in Himachal Pradesh), the ruler lost not only revenues but might have the ownership of the land. Thus after careful study of the inscription we find some traces of feudalism and we can safely deduce the early Punjab also experienced feudalism. It shows the loss of revenue and loss of ruler control over donated *agrahara* or village of Nirmand in Kangra District of early Punjab.

17. R. N. Nandi, "Land-Grant, Colonization and Food Production" in *Indian History Congress Proceedings*, Varanasi, 1969, p. 117.

18. J. F. Fleet, *op.cit.*, pp. 289-90.

RELIGIOUS POLICY OF SULTAN ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN : THE AKBAR OF KASHMIR (1420-1470 A.D.)

SALIM MUHAMMAD*

Narrating J. C. Dutt in the English translation of *Rajatarangini* "The reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin after that of Ali Shah who was ignorant of the art of ruling, was like the cooling sandal paste after the heat of summer in a desert had departed."¹ This monarch was born in 1401 A. D. as determined by legends on coins.² Rightfully claims to rub shoulders with Akbar and others of his class as one of the world's most remarkable rulers. He transcended the narrow frontiers of religious orthodoxy and brought the two major communities—Hindus and Muslims—the relation between whom have been a perpetual theme of Indo-Islamic history, to an amazingly close contact. This contact found its expression in the social and intellectual relationship, and in their mutual understanding.³

The most illustrious of the five sons of Sultan Sikandar was Shahi Khan who assumed the sovereignty of Kashmir under the title of Zain-ul-Abidin after a fierce contest with his elder brother Ali Shah.⁴ Out of the earliest teachers of the Prince was Sayyid Muhammad Hamdani from whom he took lessons on the *Quran* and the philosophy of life.⁵ Shahi Khan (Zain-ul-Abidin) remained unaffected by the Sayyid's narrow religious outlook. We have the testimony of Jonaraja that Shahi Khan's mother, Meraj, was a virtuous lady.⁶ He received his formal education at the hands of Maulana Kabir, a reputed scholar of his time.⁷ Sagacity, fortitude and the liberal outlook thus developed enabled him to tide over the prejudices of his age. The constant influence of Shahi Khan's step mother, Shobha Devi, a Hindu princess of Jammu can hardly be ignored.⁸

Seldom in history one comes across a potentate who ruled over a heterogeneous population and was yet so perfectly liberal and so completely impartial as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. Kashmir has painfully borne a socio-religious operation begun in his father's time and completed in the reign of his brother Sultan Ali Shah. By reversing the process, Zain-ul-Abidin adopted a new Religious Policy to build

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1. Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, English translation by J. C. Dutt as *Kings of Kashmir*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1898, p. 100.
2. *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, LXV, pt. I (1896), p. 225.
3. N. K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, Jammu, 1976, Introduction, IV.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
5. Sayyid Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, Srinagar, p. 12.
6. Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, Calcutta Edition, 1835, Eng. tr. by J.C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 577.
7. Baharistan-i-Shahi (anonymous), Research Lib., Srinagar.
8. *Ibid.*

up the bridges of amity, goodwill and co-existence.⁹

The religious policy of this Sultan is to be understood in the context of what preceded his time and the heavy responsibility of socio-religious reconstruction that derved upon him as a ruler. He was a devout Muslim punctilious in the observance of his religious duties, praying and observing Ramzan fasts.¹⁰ Sultan drew inspiration from Persian literature and the centres of Islamic culture and learning. He held Muslim divines from Mecca and Madina in profound respect, found solace in the company of Sufis, encouraged Muslim scholars, painters, musicians and craftsmen as a well meaning and generous ruler would do.¹¹ At the time of Zain-ul-Abidin's accession Kashmir presented a spectacle of sorrow on the domestic front. The whole socio-religious set-up of the Hindus was in a state of turmoil. Demoralised and terror-stricken by the excesses committed during the last two reigns, they had found safety in a variety of ways in self immolation, in flight beyond the borders, in remaining disguised and pretending to be a Muslim, in hiding, or in embracing Islam.¹² They were forbidden to perform their religious ceremonies and customs.¹³ This was the situation before Zain-ul-Abidin to cope with serious hand and mind. The uppermost in his mind was the anxiety to restore the shattered confidence of his non-Muslim subjects.¹⁴ The terror-stricken state official Shirya Bhatta (Physician) inspired the Sultan to undertake the task of religious restoration with a conviction and a resolve rarely equalled in history. Sultan caused complete religious freedom to be publicly announced and "each individual worshipped his God agreeably to the faith in which he was educated."¹⁵

The old class of officials, the *pandits* were driven out of Kashmir due to fanaticism of the earlier rulers. Zain-ul-Abidin gave them every encouragement to return and many responded to his call. To quote Firishta, "Preliminary to all other measures, he recalled the Brahmans who had been expelled and caused a general toleration of all religions to be publically notified."¹⁶ The assurance that none would suffer any religious disability caused a general influx of people back to the valley.¹⁷ A large number of them returned from Jammu and Kishtwar.¹⁸ The government formulated schemes for their relief and rehabilitation as well as to provide them with means of livelihood, stipends and rent free lands etc. were also provided to them.¹⁹

Zain-ul-Abidin displayed an extraordinary gesture of goodwill by allowing all those Hindus converts who had accepted Islam under duress to return to their original faith if they so wished.²⁰

Furthermore the ancient usages and customs of the Hindus violently interfered

9. N. K. Zutshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

10. Srivara, I, VII, St. 171, see also *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. I, p. 94.

11. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* (ed. by B. Dey and H. Hussain), 3 Vols., Calcutta, 1927-35, p. 657.

12. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, pp. 657-58.

13. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 654; see also Baharistan, p. 46.

14. N. K. Zutshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

15. Firishta, Muhammad Qasim, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, Lucknow, p. 469.

16. Quoted by B. V. B., *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, p. 382.

17. Baharistan, *op. cit.* p. 46; Firishta, *op. cit.*, p. 469, Nizamuddin, *op. cit.* p. 654.

18. Baharistan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

19. See Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, pp. 1049-50; Nizamuddin, *op. cit.*, p. 654.

20. Nizamuddin, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

with and violated in the previous reigns were restored.²¹ The application of the Tilak on the forehead, banned by Sikkandar was allowed.²² Now the Hindus participated freely in their festivals and studied their scriptures.²³ "One hears after a long time", Srivara states, "the pure and beautiful Dharmashastra recited, and holds it to his heart, even as white cloth holds the impression of colours, and acts according to its injunctions."²⁴ A spot on the injunction of the Mar Canal and the river Jehlum in Srinagar was used as a site for cremation by the Hindus in return for a tax levied by its owners and the state officials. When it was brought to the notice of the Sultan by Srivara, he at once ordered its abrogation and the punishment of all those responsible for its collection.²⁵

Sultan Sikandar had imposed *Jizya* upon the non-Muslims²⁶ who were required to pay two *paes* (equal to eight *tolas*) of silver annually to preserve their religion.²⁷ Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin reduced it to only one *Masha*.²⁸ It is corroborated by a Persian chronicler who states that the amount fixed under Zain-ul-Abidin was very small.²⁹ The reason why it was not totally abolished is explained by Mohibbul Hasan chiefly on the ground that the Sultan had "respect for the opinion and the sentiments of the ulema" which he did not wish to offend.³⁰ Sultan further wished to restore the banned Hindu customs like *sati* etc. which were banned during the time of Sikandar.³¹ While he adopted a policy of complete non-interference in religious affairs of others, he took pains to remove those irritants which were likely to jeopardise the execution of his scheme of communal harmony and common citizenship. The Sultan put a total ban on cow slaughter, because of the cow's sacred place in Hindu society.

As far as the socio-religious attitude of the Sultan was concerned he did much to restore Hindus sacred places of worship. A Persian chronicler writes : "All those temples and idol houses of the infidels which were broken and razed to the ground during the reign of Sikandar were repaired and rebuilt by the Sultan (Zain-ul-Abidin)"³². Old buildings were repaired and the Sultan appointed Hindu proficient sculptor, for the construction of new temples also and the repair of the old ones.³³

The Sultan is recorded to have built *mathas viharas* and monasteries for his non-Muslim subjects. Jonaraja's chronicle remarks the construction of temples by the Sultan in the newly built cities of Zainagiri and Sidhapuri for those worshipping the Sun and Siva.³⁴

The Sultan tried his best to restore Hindu religion and culture and healed the

21. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, pp. 755, 775-76; Baharistan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

22. Nizamuddin, *op. cit.*, p. 654.

23. Srivara, *op. cit.*, I, IV, 2, pp. 80, 88; Baharistan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

26. Sayyid Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Haider Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, Srinagar, p. 43.

27. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 1077.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 1078.

29. Sayyid Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

30. Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, Srinagar, 1974, p. 87.

31. Srivara, *op. cit.*, I, V, p. 61. Also Firishta, p. 464.

32. Baharistan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

33. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 945.

34. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 872.

wounds of his non-Muslim subjects, as well as to win their confidence by establishing the rule of law based on the principles of equality and justice.³⁵ The Sultan was always eager to make due enquiries after the welfare of all his subjects.

The Sultan occasionally distributed³⁶ free food to his subjects without any sort of discrimination. Srivara observes, "There was no man in Kashmir who was not fed with the king's rice, be he learned or dunce, wicked or good, a *yavana* or a twice born."³⁷

As far as state services were concerned Sultan extended the merit of principle to the recruitment of personnels. As a matter of fact, many non-Muslim subjects occupied high positions in the state administration. One of the Zain-ul-Abidin's chief confidants was Shiryā Bhatta, the Superintendent of the Courts of Justice, whom the Sultan consulted on the judicial and religious matters of the Hindus.³⁸ In the court of this Sultan, Rupy Bhatta was an architect, well-versed in his art, whom the Sultan employed for supervising the construction of a number of buildings including the celebrated Zaina Lake.³⁹ Jaya Bhatta was presumably the Sultan's treasurer through whom one crore of dinnars were distributed in charity.⁴⁰

Malik Daulat Chand and Malik Avtar Chand were two Hindu distinguished military Commanders of Zain-ul-Abidin out of six.⁴¹ Tilakacharya, a Buddhist appointed to a high position of administrative responsibility is a clear evidence of the king's earnestness to associate the members of different religious groups with the administration of the kingdom.⁴²

The Sanskrit chroniclers frequently refer to the grants of rent-free lands and villages to Brahmanas in new towns and cities where they lived in dignity and prosperity.⁴³ They held important assignments as ministers, judges and poets.⁴⁴ The Sultan also held Hindu saints in great respect and gave them vessels of gold and clothes for their piety and austerity.⁴⁵

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin did not only allow the Hindus to celebrate their social and religious festivals, but he also patronised and participated in them. Srivara refers in detail to a number of such festivals, and the Sultan's participation is corroborated by a Persian chronicle.⁴⁶ Every year on the festivals of *Nagayatra* and *Gangachakra*, Sultan fed the devotees for five days in the town of Jayapidapura.⁴⁷ The most colourful *Chaitra* festival, *Vyath Truvah* festival and *Bhadra* were also participated and celebrated by the Sultan every year. The Sultan ordered the banning of the killing of birds and fishes in several tanks.⁴⁸ The Sultan

35. *Ibid.*, p. 768.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 837.

37. Srivara, (Dutt), *op. cit.*, p. 140.

38. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, pp. 771, 1052-53.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 948.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 972.

41. Haider Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 47.

42. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 823.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 864, 879.

44. Srivara, *op. cit.*, I, i.

45. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 898; Nizamuddin, *op. cit.*, p. 656.

46. Baharistan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

47. Srivara, *op. cit.*, I, iii, p. 46.

48. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 953.

also learnt yogic exercises from the yogis and a number of miracles are attributed to him.⁴⁹ The Sultan derived consolation from the study of Hindu scriptures in his moments of anxiety.⁵⁰ Some of the Muslim historians criticised the Sultan for his tolerant Hindu subjects later on.

As a whole, Sultan aimed at bringing about closer ties between them on the plane of socio-religious relationships without subjecting them to the rigours of a formal code of moral conduct or new religion, as Ashoka or Akbar had done. He was conscious of the lack of proper understanding among Hindus and Muslims of each others culture to be the reason which bred intolerance. The Sultan, infact, possessed rare courage of conviction and a will "to perform what was beyond the power of the past sovereigns, and what will be beyond the ability of future kings."⁵¹ Jain-ul-Abidin had thus accomplished what the progressive Indian leadership is striving to achieve even as late as in the last quarter of the twentieth century.⁵²

Truly, therefore, the Kashmiris remember him even to this days, out of respect, reverence and regard as *Budshah*, 'the great king.'

49. Nizamuddin, *op. cit.*, p. 657 ; Ain., II. p. 383.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 657.

51. Srivara, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

52. Jonaraja, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

THE HISTORIC NANAK

GURBACHAN SINGH NAYYAR*

In persuasion of the policy of the British that whichever country they extended their rule over, they recorded the history of the natives. General Ochterloney asked Capt. Murray to get ready the history of the Sikhs for a clear-cut knowledge and comprehension of their past. Captain Murray asked Rattan Singh Bhangu who later on wrote *Prachin Panth Prakash* to do the needful. On Murray's query as to how did the Sikhs establish their rule, Bhangu responded interestingly which he later on inserted it in his above said work. He held that the Sikhs got their kingdom from Guru Nanak Dev, the king of kings. In order to satisfy Murray's curiosity he told him that Guru Nanak was not an ordinary saint rather he was the dynamic personality and a true emperor with whose grace many a humble individuals became sovereigns. They who served him with faith and devotion received heavenly strength and potency. Hence the rendering of a full fledged account of Guru Nanak by Rattan Singh Bhangu upto the advent of the *misldary* rule, though in an abridged form.¹

The above episode clearly depicts the strong impact of Guru Nanak's personality and teachings on his followers the legacy of which can not only be traced up to the *misldari* rule but also later on to the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as well and even to this day.

Right from the *janamsakhi* accounts to the present day much has been written about Guru Nanak and myths and legends have been so mingled up with the real facts of his life that it has become difficult to sort out the real data about the founder of Sikhism. Usually this happens in the case of many a captivating religious personalities of the world. Suffice it to say that the historic picture of Guru Nanak can emerge and his objective story can be narrated if we probe into the available sources thereof checking them with tradition and historical monuments concentrating on the message which he and his successors gave to humanity. Nevertheless, the objective Nanak is clearly visible from the shape and form of his legacy reflected in the ideals and institutions of the Sikhs and their socio-political percepts.²

It was, of course, reserved for Guru Gobind Singh, the ninth successor of Guru Nanak to cut at the roots of all such institutions as hindered the unification and consolidation and to bring up a self-contained and compact body of men who would be pious enough to free themselves from the oppression and maintain

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1. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, (early 19th century work), Amritsar, 1914.
2. For some of the institutions of the Sikhs see Teja Singh, *Sikhism : Its ideals and institutions*, Calcutta, 1938.

freedom.³ The task had been commenced by Guru Nanak and this may be clearly seen how he felt the political degradation of his people as well as their religious deterioration.⁴

Guru Nanak writes in *Rag Basant* that only the idiots try to rule over others. Lodhis were condemned by him as cowards and the people lashed up ebbing patriotism of his people who abjectly showed loyalty to the alien rulers. He also deplored the use of a foreign language when he saw it replacing the mother tongue. All this was of secular character issuing from the core of a Bhaktas heart⁵.

Guru Nanak had a firm faith in the unity of mankind and stood for lofty ideal of the greatest good of all. This definitely based on his understanding of socialism and international justice founded on righteousness.⁶

As a matter of fact, Sikh religion as a systematised regular way of life was a glorified act upon some of the important movements of the contemporary times. It goes without saying that a Sikh would rise to the same spiritual heights as his Guru, provided he devotedly and loyally followed his injunctions in the conduct of his life.⁷ Sardar Kapur Singh in his 'Guru Nanak: His Place in History' cites an interesting incident given in *Gurpratap Suraj Granth* which confirms Guru Nanak's emphasis on the practical life. Guru Nanak in his later days settled at Kartarpur on the bank of Ravi. Two rich elderly persons from central Punjab came to reside at Kartarpur. They were so impressed by the spiritual grandeur of Guru Nanak and his injunctions that they humbly petitioned that they might be allowed to spend the rest of their life in rendering personal service to the great Guru in order to get rid of the cycle of recurrent births. Albeit, the Guru told them to go back to their homes and lead life by spending their wealth in the service of the poor and in the service of the society if they desired to render ample service to his person for the interest of people is paramount over the person of the Guru. The same writer observes that as an inspired thinker and a religious teacher, Guru Nanak occupies a uniquely significant place in history. He separated pure religion from pure ethics and rituals. He determined the place of religion in social life clearly depicting their inter dependence.⁸

In order to trace Guru Nanak's contribution to our society in historical perspective we may rely upon sources authentic in nature which include *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, *Mehma Prakash*, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, *Khulast-ut-Tawarikh*, *Bachittar Natak* etc., etc. to be supplemented by material available in scattered and abridged form. *Janamsakhis* are a vital source of information which need to be utilized with great caution. Unfortunately the dates of events as well as the incidents pertaining to the life of the great Guru have not reached us in authentic form and are crowded with mystery. Here we take only two points by way of instance.

Guru Nanak's date of birth is considered to be *Vaisakh Sudi 3*, 1526 B. K. (15th April, 1469). It is confirmed by earlier sources as the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Bhai*

3. Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1950, p. 67.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of Sikh Gurus*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 69.

7. Ganda Singh, 'Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Transformation of Sikhism,' in Taran Singh (Ed.), *Sikh Gurus and the Indian Spiritual Thought*, Patiala, 1981, p. 67.

8. Kapur Singh, 'Guru Nanak : His Place in History,' Taran Singh (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 119.

Mani Singh Wali Janamsakhi, Mehrban Janam Sakhi, Mehma Prakash etc., etc. Later biographies of Guru Nanak's life like *Nanak Prakash* of Bhai Santokh Singh, however, speak in favour of *Kartik Purnima* 1526 B. K. (1469 A. D.). Albeit, if we count the period of Guru Nanak's life in terms of years, months and days, it takes us back to the month of *Vaisakh* (April).⁹

It is quite in the fitness of things to take up here an instance of evidence available to us in the form of a myth... the incident which conveys us a mythical episode that Guru Nanak levishly distributed edibles from Nawab's *Modi Khana* when he happened to be there as an employee. The matter was reported to the Nawab but on weighing, the ingredients were found in a perfect order. We may put the incident in a modified form that since the Guru was receiving his salary in terms of kind and not in cash, he might have distributed his own share of salary which set things right. So if we convey logical conclusions to our readers it may benefit more and be comprehended more easily. Likewise several other incidents of Guru Nanak's life may be explained in logical settings.

In conclusion, it might be pointed out that Guru Nanak's contribution to contemporary society is sufficiently clear to history and the myths and legends gathered round his name as usual, hinder our approach to his preceptory and significantly unique spiritual grandeur. As a matter of fact, he determined the place of religion in our social life and reconstructed a universal human society. The legacy left by the spiritual heights he reached at made available to us in the form of his compositions is a glorious tribute left to us.

9. Teja Singh, Ganda Singh. *op.cit.* p.2, fn.1.

SCIENTIFIC TEMPER AND GURBANI

RAI JASBIR SINGH*

As enshrined in Article No. 51 A of the Constitution of India it is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India :

(h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.¹ Hence it is essential not only to attain the knowledge of science but also to lead life with critical and discriminatory understanding. It is also incumbent upon the human beings to deliver scientific knowledge and to criticise unscientific fundamental and sectarian trends prevalent in the society.

Gurbani, constituting scripture of the Sikh faith paves a way towards ideal and religion based life. The problem is how to be serious in this effort and receive proper guidance. For the purpose a *sabd* should be taken as a unit and it is necessary to understand and interlink its all parts. A unit of single or two lines may mislead us. Alongwith it the symbols should also be analysed in their proper contexts. A clear understanding of thematic terms is also necessary. For example the epithets of God should be taken into proper context and theology.

Kabir says :

Utter thou the name of Rama,
but know how to utter,
For the one pervadeth all, all over,
while the other is contained only in himself. (G.G., p. 1374)

Gurbani provides us with sound understanding on it.

Guru Nanak says :²

Bride! with deer like eyes
Hear thou the word of infinite wisdom
That one must trade only in the thing
whose content one knowth
Bride! declare and proclaim that thou
wilt side not with evil doers
and shout 'victory to the friends'
Yea, the proclamation that leadeth thee to
thy spouse, give thou it thy thought...³

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1. *The Constitution of India*, Government of India, Aug. 15, 1983, 51 A (h), p. 24.

2. English translation from the commentaries of Dr G. S. Talib and Dr Gopal Singh.

3. ਸੁਣਿ ਮੁਧੇ ਹਰਣਾਖੀਏ ਗੁੜਾ ਵੈਣੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ।

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਵਾਣਿਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ।

ਦੋਹੀ ਦਿਚੈ ਦੁਰਜਨਾ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਕੂੰ ਜੈਕਾਰੁ।

ਜਿਤੁ ਦੋਹੀ ਸਜਣ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਲਹੁ ਮੁਧੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ।---

Guru Granth, p. 1410.

Herein human beings are guided to have clear understanding of their aim and means to attain it. The aim of life and its pursuance is also clearly defined and human beings are directed to have their own right path of ideal life. Nothing is left ambiguous and there is a least chance to be lead astray.

In another *sabda* Guru Arjan imparts us that :

Despite recitation of holy text, study of *vedas* and praxis of bowels and the kundalini

From the five agents has not come parting of company,
And more and more in egoistic thinking of the bound. (1)
Cherished one by such devices comes not union
Innumerable are the means I have adopted.
Tired of all such at the Lord's portal I threw myself,
Praying, Grant me discriminating understanding⁴ (pause).

The need of discriminating understanding is depicted here. The life based on all types of mere rituals, superstitions and hypocrisy is considered futile and instead, morality, *sangat* and recitation of and discussion about godhood is prescribed.

Some other *sabdas* may also be quoted to show that the *gurbani* repudiate the unscientific claims on certain issues. It criticises the mythical views regarding the creation of world and presented the ideas based on scientific attitude :

What the hour and occasion
What the date and day,
What the season and month
When creation began?
Had Brahmins found the answer
In their scriptures would they have recorded it;
Nor have the Kazis from Koranic record
The Yogi knows not the date and day,
season and month;
The Creator who made the universe,
alone knows the answer.⁵

and

Whoever realizes this, enlightened shall be
How much is the load under which this Bull stands
The earth extends beyond forthest limits

4. ਪਾਨ੍ਹ ਪੜਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ ਨਿਵਲਿ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਸਾਧੇ ।
ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਅਧਿਕ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ ।
ਪਿਆਰੈ ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਮੈ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਮ ਅਨੇਕਾ ।
ਹਾਰਿ ਪਰਿਓ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੁਧਿ ਬਿਬੇਕਾ । ਰਹਾਉ ।
5. ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ।
ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ।
ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ।
ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ।
ਬਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ।
ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਨੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ।

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid.

On what support does all this rest?⁶

Similarly, the religious life based on miraculous power is also rejected saying that—*ridhis* and *sidhis* leadeth astray of the aim for leading a balanced life.⁷ and

Were I to wear vesture of fire,
build my house of snow
And on iron to feeds

Were I at one gulp to drink all suffering
And drive the earth about;

Were I to weigh the Heavens in scale,
With a penny-weight in the pan;

Were I to expand beyond all measures,
And drive all creation before me by the nose string,

Were my mind such power to acquire

As to accomplish all and force other to the same

His boons are great as is the Lord,

That He grants as is this will

Saith Nanak; In His grace the greatest of all

boons is inspiration to laud His holy Name (1)⁸

In this way, we see that the *Gurbani* paves the ways for the development of scientific temper of mind. In the approaching 21st century we have to discard the unscientific attitude and try to attain rational and scientific knowledge in order to inculcate secular humanitarian, non-fundamentalistic society. *Gurbani* can provide us with ample and correct guidance for that we should be ready seriously and with open heartedness.

6. ਜੇ ਕੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ।

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ।

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ।

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ।

Ibid., p. 3.

7. ਆਪਿ ਨਾਭੁ ਨਾਥੀ ਸਭ ਜਾ ਕੀ

ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਅਵਰਾ ਸਾਦ।

Ibid., p. 6.

8. ਪਹਿਰਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਹਿਵੈ ਘਰੁ ਬਾਧਾ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਸਾਰੁ ਕਰਾਈ।

ਸਗਲੇ ਦੂਖ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰਿ ਪੀਵਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਹਾਕ ਚਲਾਈ।

ਧਰਿ ਤਾਰਾਜੀ ਅੰਬਰੁ ਤੇਲੀ ਪਿਛੈ ਟੰਕੁ ਚੜਾਈ।

ਏਵਡੁ ਵਧਾ ਮਾਵਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਭਸੈ ਨਥਿ ਚਲਾਈ।

ਏਤਾ ਤਾਣੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕਰੀ ਡਿ ਆਖਿ ਕਰਾਈ।

ਜੇਵਡ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਤੇਵਡ ਦਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਦੇ ਕਰੇ ਰਜਾਈ।

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਡਿਆਈ।

Ibid., p. 147.

BATTLE STRATEGY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH : A CASE STUDY OF THE BATTLE OF BHANGANI

DEVINDER KUMAR VERMA*

Guru Gobind Singh had to fight a number of battles against the hill chiefs and the Mughal forces but his conflict with the Mughals was more serious. He had to fight much against his wishes as the exigency of the time so demanded. Albeit, when he was forced to fight, he fought whole-heartedly with great care and strategy. Mostly he fought defensive and with a very high moral of his army.

From the contemporary writings we know that Guru Gobind Singh kept the army for the protection of his devotees and their faith. On the contrary to it we do not find any record which throw light on the system of recruitment of his army. However, it is certain that he had recruited the people irrespective of his caste and creed. The preference was given to those who had come into the Khalsa fold, however, the example of the non-Khalsa recruitment in the Guru's army was also not uncommon.

Senapat, author of *Sri Gursobha* and a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, writes, "the Sikh *Sangat* arrived there (Anandpur) from far and near. Many of them returned to their homes and many chose to stay. He gave weapons to them to fight in the battle-field."¹ In a similar tone Bhai Santokh Singh wrote, "When the people gathered round the Guru, he asked them to join and got their name registered and their descriptive rolls prepared."² Thus, it seems that the Guru may have put a register to note the identity of his soldiers and also their whereabouts. Tradition holds that the Sikh soldiers did not receive remuneration and were paid no allowances. They were content with the Guru's blessings. Some of the writers without mentioning their sources write that the Sikh soldiers "were paid half yearly allowances."³ As already mentioned we do not have sufficient material to establish whether before recruitment some efficiency test or weapon training was necessary or not for the recruits. But after the battle of Bhangani, the Guru realised that some of his soldiers are not well versed in the use of arms, therefore he started giving military training to his soldiers. He issued certain injunctions on different occasions at Anandpur

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1. Senapat, *Sri Gursobha*, Patiala, 1967, p. 48 :

ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਨੰਦ ਪੁਰ ਸੁਬਸ ਬਾਸ ਤਿਹ ਥਾਨ ।

ਪਰਸਤ ਸੰਗਤ ਦਰਸ ਜਿਹ ਪਾਵਤ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਧਾਨ ।

ਕੇਤਕ ਸਿਖ ਬਿਸਾ ਭਏ ਕੇਤਕ ਰਹੇ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ।

ਕੀਓ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਜਿ ਜੁਧ ਕੇ ਬਾਜੈ ਅਨਹਦ ਤੂਰ ।

2. Bhai Santokh Singh, *Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, 1928-37, p. 5747.

3. Sunder Singh, *Battles of Guru Gobind Singh*, Amritsar, 1935, pp. 10-12.

Sahib. It is said that he ordered for preparing *Karah Parsad* in large quantities and then advising the *Sangat* gathered together round the Guru to loot and eat the same with the result that the Sikhs by means of mutual quarrels and combats learnt to fight for their right at the preliminary stage. It was the sure result of working upon the religious and martial instincts of the Sikhs that the Guru prepared the Sikhs for fighting with confidence and courage against the forces of evil and fanaticism.

The Guru always kept very high tradition of fighting of warfare before him from which he or his followers never deviated. The *dharmayudh* of Guru Gobind Singh must not be understood to have meant a war of aggression against any religion as such. It only meant *yudh* or warfare for the sake of *dharma* or for the protection of religion and fought for the moral principles.

As we know that Guru Gobind Singh was successful in almost all the battles which he fought against the rival forces. The critical analysis of the battles will reveal that these battles were not for the purpose of sovereignty but fought for the protection of their faith,⁴ therefore battles were fought on a higher plan of truth where the only aim of soldiers was to protect his faith. Thus in such battles the devotee-cum-soldiers fought from tooth and nail for the utter glory of supreme sacrifice.

Guru Gobind Singh was known for his excellent organisation skill. Sometimes, the victory of the Guru in the battle-field is also said to be due to the better planning, strategy and war tactics followed by him and his soldiers. It is said that the Guru himself has added as and when need be 'the planning and action' programme to evolve a strategy for the protection of his devotee-cum-soldiers. For instance, in the battle of Bhangani, the Guru's selection of battle-field in the technical sense was an important base from tactical view point as well as for strategy.⁵ Giani Gian Singh lucidly picturesqued the battle-field of Bhangani. He writes that the Guru faced the enemy from the rear side while in the back river Jamuna (riverlet Giri) and Guru's fort Paonta.⁶ In this situation the enemy (hill chiefs) had only one i.e. rear side to attack the Guru while the latter had full view of the enemy and had all the open sides to attack. Secondly the Guru was on the top side of the hillock whereas the enemy was at the foot hills with sandy areas. In *Bachittar Natak*, the Guru himself writes, "the battle of his reserve, with the hillock in between was hidden from the view of the rival forces and he could plan the manoeuvres of his troops without letting the opponents know anything about his intentions. Thus the Guru could clearly see the whole of the force on the otherside and could direct his men with an advantage which was denied to the enemy. Consequently the initiative throughout the battle lay with the Guru and the enemy's invading army was virtually on the defensive in all the engagements which followed the first rush of the Guru's men upon their opponents."⁷

Giani Gian Singh writes that when the Guru's men fired downward at the enemy the sandy area presented a ghastly invisible dark look and thus it became

4. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, London, 1909, p. 29.

5. *Ibid*; Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Patiala, 1970, p. 805.

6. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 805.

7. *Bachittar Natak*, VIII, 7, 15, 20; Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 805-06.

difficult for the enemy to have a complete view of the Guru and his soldiers standing on the hill-top covering with shadow of thick clouds.⁸ It was one of the reasons that the hill chiefs, who came to subdue the Guru, having a large army were badly defeated.

Mobility to the battle-field is another factor which provides the mover in a better position. The Guru took the initiative. Once knowing that the enemy was coming for his attack, the Guru made every possible haste to move his troops and occupy some vantage point. Having anticipated correctly the route that the Garhwal troops would follow he marched with his army in full speed to a mound and took position on it before the enemy reached that place. He also informed Budhu Shah of Sadhaura and Medni Parkash of Sirmor to reach there. Choosing his own ground for the battle the Guru had won half the battle before it actually began. A similar sense of mobility and selection of position was displayed by him both at Chamkaur Sahib and Khidrana.

Another important war strategy was that the Guru always divided his army into groups depending upon the need and put them under the command of his most trusted and brave soldiers that how and when to attack. This point of view has been supported by Senapat.⁹ The battle was conducted under his personal supervision. The Paonta fort was placed under Ram Koer, Mohri and Kale Khan, able commanders, for safeguarding the rear. Rest of the army was divided into three groups under Kirpal Chand, Sango Shah and Budhu Shah with adequate reserves. The reserve were also suitably positioned.

Sango Shah¹⁰ was appointed as commander of the Guru, who made the best tactical use of the ground. He stationed his troops on the right bank of the deep ravine which served as rampart and he met the enemy at the ground of his own choice. For good luck the then blowing wind and its direction as the tradition holds was put to the advantage by the Guru which accelerated the speed of their arrows which killed a number of the enemy soldiers practically rolling them down a steep hill. Thus the proper position of the Guru's soldiers worked havoc among the enemy.¹¹

Guru Gobind Singh was fully aware of the battle-field situation and also instructed to his soldiers that how and when to attack. It is said that the Guru had made his soldiers understand that in the time of heavy fighting let the enemies be engaged with a few number of soldiers and the rest may attack from different directions taking into consideration the geography of the battle-field. Giani Gian Singh throw light on the battle strategy the Guru had adopted in the battle-field of Bhangani. He writes, "with the order of the Guru, one Sango Shah took a contingency

8. Giani Gian Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 805-06.

9. Senapat, *op. cit.*, p. 9,

ਆਨ ਕੈ ਖੇਤ ਪੈ ਦੇਖ ਚਤਰੰਗ

ਸਭ ਮੋਰਚੇ ਬਾਟਿ ਕੈ ਮਿਸਲ ਲਾਏ

Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p.63; Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1432.

10. He was the elder brother of Ganga Ram, Jit Mal, Mohri Chand and Gulab Chand. They also participated in the battle and fought gallantly.

11. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, V, p.40; Giani Gian Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 820; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1964, p. 155.

of the army with him to face the enemy. The army of the hill chiefs was allowed to advance by the Sikh soldiers and it was trapped in such a situation that on the right and left were small hills and from front side the commander of the forces Sango Shah attacked the enemies in such a dashing way that it created a confusion among the opposite forces. In a given situation the enemy's forces has only one choice either to face Guru's soldiers in a small trap or retreat back."¹² Giani Gian Singh further writes that enemies could not advance and left the battle-field in the haste.¹³

The dividing of his troops and immediate strategy formed by the Guru and his soldiers at the time of battle was not a permanent mode of fighting for them. It depends upon the need and environment that how, when and what tactics are to follow to save the devotees from the onslaughts of the invaders.

Guru Gobind Singh adopted the strategy of making sudden attack on the invading forces then retreating to a place of safety and after some time to repeat the sudden surprise by means of a fresh attack. This was probably done in view of the smaller number of soldiers of the Sikhs, compared by the enemy. As a matter of fact, this marked the beginning of adopted of the system of guerrilla tactics of warfare.

Guru Gobind Singh often mention hand to hand fighting where gallantry was considered a great quality of a soldier.¹⁴

From the battle of Bhangani one thing clearly emerged that the victory of Guru Gobind Singh was due to the strong feelings and unique strategy of warfare introduced by him in the hearts of his disciples.

Ganga Ram, Jit Mal, Mohri Chand and Gulab Chand under the command of their brother Sango Shah showed acts of bravery and great skill in arms. Sango Shah has been addressed by the Guru as Shah Sangram, Jit Mal as an apostle of patience, Gulab Chand as Ghazi and Ganga Ram as the marker in archery. Mohri Chand has been described as the very image of encouragement.¹⁵ Pandit Daya Ram and Mahant Kirpal Chand, the peaceful devotees, properly jumped into the battle field with *lathis* or sticks or which ever article they happened to catch hold. Kirpal Chand gave such a hard blow to Hayat Khan on the head, that his brain issued fourth bubbling as butter flowed from the *gopies* pitchers which Lord Krishan broke. Dewan Nand Chand, armed himself with spear and sword showed feats of bravery. Sahib Singh *khatri* strove in the battle fury and show blood thrust heroes and created a havoc in the enemy's ranks.¹⁶

Guru Gobind Singh himself killed two generals of hill chiefs namely Raja Hari Chand and Pathan Bhikhan Khan in a hand to hand fight with them.¹⁷

But the Guru's presence of mind combined with boldness let him to take calculated risk at the very outset of the battle. He ordered the major section of his forces to concentrate its attack on the Pathans. The units commanded by Kirpal, Dayal, Sahib Chand and Diwan Chand dashed to the battle-field with their crude

12. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 807.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Bachitar Natak, VIII, 7.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 10; Senapat, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

16. *op. cit.*, pp. 26-33 Senapat, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

17. Senapat, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

arms. Sango Shah let his forces on the right bank of rivulet Kalinthri.¹⁸

Guru Gobind Singh had taught his soldiers to follow Sikh war ethics, therefore, also, generally it is said that a Sikh will not attack his enemy unarmed. He will challenge him and then shout at him to prepare for war.¹⁹ After the battle is over, the wounded whether foe or friends were treated equally by the Sikhs.²⁰

According to the Sikh tradition the allied army of hill rajas numbered about 10,000 and that of the Guru was initially 2000.²¹ Thus the ratio between the rival forces seems to be 5:1. But at this critical juncture five hundred Pathans mercenaries (under Bhikhan Khan, Nijabat Khan, Hayat Khan, excepting Kale Khan) who are fully aware of the Guru's plan of operation left him and joined the hill chiefs. Not only this, they encouraged their new masters by saying that the Guru's main dependence was on them and the rest of his army was just rebbles who had never seen war and would run away at the fire of first shot. And also some Udasis excluding Kirpal who had fattened themselves on the Guru's langar, deserted the Guru. As a result of this the ratio of the opposing army turned to be almost 10:1.²² The question of ratio in those days was more significant as compared to modern times because in those days the number counted considerably. Moreover, there were practically no other military aids unlike those employed in modern chemical warfare and long range weapons which could reduce or destroy the enemy's strength.

18. Butte Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 189; Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1433; Bhai Kahan Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 3641.

19. Bhai Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 4771; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-33; Taja Singh & Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

20. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-34.

21. Ravi Batra, *Leadership in the finest mould; Guru Gobind Singh*, Amritsar, 1979, p. 34.

22. *Ibid.*

BANDA BAHADUR'S ROLE AND PLACE IN HISTORY

RAJ PAL SINGH*

Banda Bahadur was a versatile personality of the eighteenth century India, who aroused the dormant energies of the oppressed people groaning under the agony of pain. By his constant struggle and sacrifices, he filled the hearts of the down-trodden, oppressed and suppressed poor people of India with a lofty longing for socio-economic and political freedom and for some time he was successful in his chosen mission. He lived and died like a true hero. He was an exemplary patriot, a brave warrior, a lover of freedom and a man whose self-respect and sensitivity was superb. But Banda Bahadur continues to be one of those few historical figures who have defied the judgement not only of their contemporaries but also of posterity. The life and achievements of Banda Bahadur (1670-1716 A. D.) present a number of difficulties and paradoxes in the eighteenth century history of India. In the present paper I have tried to give an over-all view on the issue to enable the readers to make a fair estimate and assessment of the contribution made by him. On the basis of discussion on various aspects of history related with him I have tried to know Banda Bahadur's place in the contemporary history of India.

I. Banda Bahadur Rises to Power

The story of the rise of Banda Bahadur to power coincided with the time when India had to pass through a series of political convulsions after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb. He had to face the imperialist Mughals during the regimes of Bahadur Shah, Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Siyar. The risky adventure to establish the Sikh sovereignty to which Banda Bahadur had committed himself heart and soul could only have been successfully carried out had either Mughal Empire been so weak or had he received close co-operation of all the sections of society of the Punjab including the neighbouring hill rulers. Instead of it, he, during the course of his long struggle, was not only deserted by upper caste Hindus and opposed by Muslim aristocracy of the region but also deserted by the Sikhs led by Bawa Binod Singh and Ajit Singh, the adopted son of Guru Gobind Singh. It was, therefore, no wonder that he had to succumb to the imperialists at Gurdas Nangal.

Banda Bahadur was born in a mediocre peasant family of Rajauri in 1670, passed his boyhood in poverty and perversion. To keep his body and soul together, he laboured hard on his ancestral small farm and also turned to hunting. But he was not a hunter of cruel disposition. Moved by killing of a pregnant doe, he not only renounced hunting for good but also became an ascetic at an early age of 15 years. He travelled from Kashmir to Maharashtra, where he settled at Nanded. He became famous among the people for his occultant arts (*tantrik sidhis*) as *Bairagi*.

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When Guru Gobind Singh was marching towards Deccan in the company of Bahadur Shah, he heard about Banda Bahadur's influence and fame. The tenth Guru waited upon him, baptised and appointed him as the 'Bakshi' of the *Khalsa*. Reposing full faith in Banda Bahadur, the Guru sent him to the Punjab to punish the oppressors of the people and commanded the *Khalsa* to co-operate with him in his mission.

Banda Bahadur, who was resilient and courageous person, renounced the life of a hermit on the bidding of the Guru to take to arms in defence of the oppressed and down-trodden and became a saint-soldier. After the murder of Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur descended on Punjab and moulded the *Khalsa* into a self-conscious socio-political organisation. He fixed his aim to establish a sovereign power of the Sikhs as the only means of saving their religion, property and life. For the attainment of this mission, he sacrificed himself. Commenting on the martyrdom of Banda Bahadur, Khushwant Singh has aptly written :

"Thus died Banda Bahadur—a man who first chose to renounce the world to live in the peaceful seclusion of a sylvan hermitage, then renounced both pacifism and the life of solitude to rouse a downtrodden peasantry to take up arms, a man who shook one of the most powerful empires in the world to its very foundations with such violence that it was never again able to re-establish its authority."¹

II. His Leadership and Administrative Qualities

Banda Bahadur took the leadership of the *nascent Khalsa* at the time, when India was passing through a series of political convulsions after the death of the Alamgir Aurangzeb. In fact, the eighteenth century was a period of turmoil, struggle and serious conflicts in the history of India. In the first two decades of this century several succession wars were fought between the Mughal princes leading to deplorable state of affairs in the empire. During this period, the centrifugal forces that had been kept under control so far intensified their attempts to end the strong, unified but oppressive Mughal administration. Under the wave of regeneration and reaction, the Jats around Delhi-Agra, the Marathas in Maharashtra, the Rajputs in Rajasthan revolted with added vigour and staked their claims for sovereignty in their respective regions and to play important role in the ever crumbling Mughal empire. So far as the Sikhs are concerned they had made their presence felt earlier also but it was Banda Bahadur who turned their slowly germinating desire of attaining sovereignty to reality by capturing the major chunk of territory between Satluj and Yamuna. He issued coins, *farmans* duly marked by the seal and started a new era coinciding with his capture of Sirhind and established his headquarters at Mukhlispur (Dabar) near Sadhaura now in Yamunanagar district and renamed it Lohgarh. Here he constructed beautiful palace, raised fort of considerable size, with high and thick walls. From the first ridge to the walls of Lohgarh fort itself, Banda Bahadur had got built fifty-two defensive posts arranged in such a manner that each protected the other, thus exposing an assailant to a deadly fire throughout his advance. Likewise, he strongly fortified Sadhaura and fortress of Gurdas Nangal.

It was from his capital headquarters at Lohgarh that Banda Bahadur took the bold decision of replacing the Mughal administration from his recently conquered territories by establishing his own police posts and revenue officials. He earned good will of people by abolishing the *zamindar* system. This speaks volumes of his

1. H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*. Vol. 1, pp. 117-18.

constructive genius. He was given no respite by the imperialists during the course of his entire period of struggle against the empire but he paid minutest attention to ameliorate the lot of the people under his realms. He is rightly considered "the first man to deal a severe blow to the intolerant rule of the Mughals in the Punjab and to break the first sod in the conquest of that province by the Sikhs."² In the words of Gokul Chand Narang, "It is of course undeniable that the man who brought about a revolution in the character of the Sikhs and infused new life into them was Gobind Singh. But it may be said without any fear of contradiction that it was Banda who taught them first how to fight and conquer. Without the least disarrangement to the extra-ordinary genius and military ability of the Tenth Guru it may be pointed out that his activities were mainly confined to desultory warfare with the petty chiefs of the Hill States and the first time he came into serious collusion with the imperial troops, he found the shock too great for him, his warfare may without any irreverence be called the rehearsal of the great drama which the Sikhs were to enact under the guidance of Banda. The plot was of the Guru's conception, some actors were prepared and trained by him, but it was Banda who brought them out and made them play as it were before the full house, whereas the Guru's possessions had not even temporarily extended much beyond the confines of the hills, the whole country from Lahore to Panipat lay for once, practically at Banda's feet."³

It is true that much devastation of villages and towns took place in the process, "people abandoned their hearths and homes in panic, blood flowed in torrents and excesses must have been committed by Banda and his men to settle scores of a whole century of persecution and humiliation not only heaped upon the Sikhs, but the majority people of Hindus and even a sophisticated liberal minority of the Muslims as well like the Sufis and the Shias."⁴ It is said that Banda had put to sword at least 50,000 people in battle for empire building. According to H. R. Gupta, "Banda Bahadur should not rank less than Alexander the Great, Changiz Khan, Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Abdali or Napoleon Bonaparte."⁵

The victories and dazzling successes were facilitated by the combined efforts of Banda Bahadur and his followers. Who had rallied after centuries of subjection to fight against their oppressors and to conquer by destroying the awe kindly, Banda Bahadur received help and support of almost all sections of society including the ruling elite such as big land-lords *zamindars*, merchants and even some rulers of the hill states of Punjab. Throughout the course of his struggle he derived strength from the toiling down-trodden and peasants irrespective of their religious affiliations. As the imperialist Government took severe steps against the rebels and the revolt continued for longer time than expected, the merchants and trading community's interests began to suffer and they changed their loyalty. Now they, including the *Khatris* in government service, big land-lords and rulers of the hill states, began to extend full co-operation to the imperialists in their efforts to tame Banda Bahadur and his associates. In view of it, Gurcharan Singh's contention is totally baseless when he says, "as for the Hindus in the Punjab, Banda Singh received no help from

2. Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, p. 210.

3. Gokul Chand Narang, *Transformation of the Sikhism*, pp. 110-11.

4. Gopal Singh, *History of the Sikh People*, p. 354.

5. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 37.

them."⁶ Likewise, his following conclusion is also ill-founded and contrary to historical facts that "in spite of hardships, Banda Bahadur neither offered himself for service under Aurangzeb nor did he gave any consideration to the terms offered to him."⁷ For, Aurangzeb had died before Banda Bahadur revolted against the empire. Hence there was no question of his rejection his offer of terms of service. The fact is that Banda was looked upon as the champion of Hinduism and he was regarded by "the Hindus as the scourge of Muhammadans sent by god to punish them for their crimes. Oppressed Hindus resorted to him for help which was willingly and efficiently given, a fact which had a great influence in promoting the growth of the Sikh power."⁸ Same was true with the Muslim followers of Banda Bahadur who extended them fullest security of life and property as well as ensured religious freedom to them. In fact Banda Bahadur was a man of masses whom they obeyed ungrudgingly and blindly. In this regard Rattan Singh Bhangu says : "What is equally amazing is that when he asked his followers to lay down arms, not one disobeyed him and piled up their arms before him, and doors were opened upto the enemy to face the sure death."⁹

Banda Bahadur was an energetic, daring, able and enterprising leader, who has rightly been compared with Shivaji in his qualities of head and heart. Like Shivaji he never desecrated the sanctity of religious places, purity and chastity of women or innocent people. In the opinion of Sohan Singh, Banda Bahadur in dexterity "had surpassed even Shivaji and was matchless master of mesmerism and other occultant science."¹⁰ Banda Bahadur was expert in distinguishing himself and was so dextrous in this accomplishment that his most intimate acquaintances were unable to recognise him when he wished to evade detection. Comparing him with Shivaji, Gokul Chand Narang goes on to say that Banda Bahadur "seems to have been indeed as great expert in this art as Shivaji himself and perhaps greater in as much as he was regarded by his followers as well as enemies a soucrer who could fly into the air at will."¹¹

The success of the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur was chiefly due to their unhesitating dash and courage and strategy and tactics of which he, in his short career never lost sight of. Their favourite arms were long fire-lock, bow and sword."¹² Banda Bahadur's leaderships and the great successes proved boon to the cause of Sikhism. It "gave Sikhism a prestige and a power which had never yet been associated with it. Those who had never heard the names of the Gurus were impressed with his grandeur by the victories of Banda and joined his ranks in thousands. His personal magnetism too was great and his undaunted courage and extra-ordinary valour knit his followers closely to him."¹³ Even the new entrants in his company were so overtaken by his qualities that they smilingly sacrificed everything including their lives

6. *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XV, Part 1, April 1982, p. 93.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Gokul Chand Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 103 f.n. 3.

9. Quoted by Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p.356.

10. Sohan Singh, *Banda the Brave*, p. 151.

11. Gokul Chand Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 107, f.n. 1.

12. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 290.

13. Gokul Chand Narang, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

as Gulaboo¹⁴ did to save Banda's life during the siege of Sadhaura and Lohgarh by Bahadur Shah in 1710. This sacrifice like that of thousands and thousands of others executed by the Mughals speaks of the influence of Banda Bahadur's exemplary leadership and lofty character.

It is historical fact that the ten Gurus had enunciated principles and Guru Gobind Singh had set the seal of his sanction on war and bloodshed if the cause of justice and righteousness could not be otherwise vindicated. It must also be remembered that ideas are the essential basis for action. But behind ideas there must be men to carry them out and the character, discipline to translate them into results. No one can be true to his mission of creed if he seeks satisfaction merely to brave ideas and in criticism of others who do not argue with him. That is the way of facile intellectual opportunism. Every achievement requires character and discipline and united action and readiness to sacrifice the individual self for the larger cause. Banda Bahadur's successes should be seen against this back-drop of his followers. The following incident goes on to depict how much Banda Bahadur dared to transform the psychology of a sullen, and terrified people. "When a deputation of Hindus called upon him at Sadhaura, complaining against the tyrannies of Muslim landlords, he asked his body-guard to shoot the complainants. When questioned respectfully as to how the aggrieved deserved such a bloody treatment he answered : "You are so many and your oppressors so few. Is it not a shame that instead of dispossessing him, you should make a grievance of your own helplessness? The complainants did as they were bidden to."¹⁵ And the examples of this type multiplied when the news spread like a wild fire in the villages of the Punjab.

Banda Bahadur not only performed prodigies of valour but led a pious and disciplined life. He was devoted husband and loving father. He had killed so many people with his own hands in the cause of liberation of the masses but the affection of father in him did not allow him to kill his son Ajaya Singh when the butcher did him to do so.

Banda strictly adhered to the code of conduct of Khalsa and through his *hukamnans* issued to the Sangats from time to time emphasised upon them the need of its observance in his *hukamnama* issued to Bhai Dharam Singh and others of Rupe Ki Jog. He exhorted the *Sangat* to repeat the name of the Gurus and serve the *Khalsa Panth* by joining the fight fully armed.¹⁶ In the same way, in another *hukamnana* issued to *Sarbat Khalsa* of Jaunpur Jog he emphasised the need to the observance of the '*rahit*' and to serve the *Khalsa* for the protection of '*Satyug*' ushered in by the establishment of the first sovereign state of the *Khalsa* in place of the tyrannical and oppressive regime of the Mughals. They must remain united to preserve it. He exhorted them to eat staple food for saking *bhang*, tobacco, wine (*satoo* and *daru*), opium, flesh, fish onion etc.¹⁷

Banda Bahadur not only preached austerity but also practised it in his life so as to inspire the rank and file to follow the same. Writing about the hardships faced by Banda Bahadur and his followers during the course of the siege of Gurdas-

14. According to Khafi Khan Gulaboo was tobaconist in the Mughal army that invaded Lohgarh under Bahadur Shah.

15. Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p.357.

16. See *Hukamnama*.

17. Free translation of *Hukamnama*.

Nangal due to short supply of eatables, Rattan Singh Bhangu says, "No one knew when did Banda drink water or eat food. whenever asked, he replied he was on a fast. Some thought he had spirits in his possession, others say that he had disciplined his body through yogic austerities, or taken some such herb that he had controlled his appetite."¹⁸ Banda Bahadur was thinking about the future options open before him. He had three options before him. He could easily escape from the fortress with the chosen followers as Bawa Binod Singh had done. Or, he could opt for continuing the fight and die fighting or the third option was the surrender to the enemy. He had amazing capacity to comprehend the exigencies to the enemy. He had amazing capacity to comprehend the exigencies of the situation and cope with them. He was brave leader and above all his qualities were real political that convinced him to surrender alongwith his staunch followers to make the Khalsa a symbol of sacrifice and gave self and everything dear to ones being. "The quiet manner in which he allowed himself to be captured alongwith his followers was not by fear of death. Banda had given no quarters, nor did he expect one. The equanimity with which Banda and his brave followers faced the executioner....would mitigate any such charge. Banda had known the impact which Sambhaji's execution had produced in Maharashtra. He knew well that the inspiration derived from the story of horrors perpetrated on him would survive his political achievements."¹⁹ How judicious was he in his judgement of the situation and prophetic about its impact has been proved by the succeeding history of the Sikhs and the Punjab.

III. His Role Assessed and Conclusion

Since Banda was fighting for a cause and those who fight for principles never measure the chances of success or failures in the worldly manner. Escape from the stronghold by making sallies on the Mughal army would have meant the further rift in the *Khalsa* as Ajit Singh and his associates were busy in hobnobbing with the enemies of the *Khalsa*. Instead he chose submission to the brute force of the enemy and rightly become a martyr for the cause of the poor and the *Khalsa Panth*. He possessed the qualities of a hero. It is mentioned in the *Adi Granth* (p. 1105) that :

He alone is the hero who fights to defend
the humble and the helpless,
Who, even though hacked limb by limb,
Will not flee from the field.

It is wrong to say that triumphs of Banda Bahadur "are not remembered as heroic acts but as malicious and cold-blooded atrocities or that "the memory of Banda is not held in much esteem by the Sikhs."²⁰ Banda Bahadur is remembered with great honour and full respect not only by the Sikhs but also by all lovers of humanity and socio-economic and political justice. He was a patriot *par excellence*, a devout Sikh and an ardent freedom fighter. In the words of Ganda Singh, "next to the Guru, Banda Singh was the first person to place before the Sikhs a practical demonstration of staunch nationalism and to teach them to sacrifice themselves smilingly at the altar of the Khalsa." He goes on to say that "the curtain has long since been rung down and the actor has passed away from the scene of his activities,

18. Quoted by Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

19. Gianeshwar Khurana, *op. cit.*, 112.

20. S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 279.

never to appear again, but his spirit has again and again shown in the brave deeds of his co-religionists in the cause of the poor and the helpless....His name shall ever writ large on the roll of humanity for this selfless sacrifice in the sacred cause of persecuted humanity devoted to God and the Guru."²¹

Like Chhattarpati Shivaji, Maharaja Suraj Mal and Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur's promising career was cut short than what could be effected. But like Shivaji and Maharaja Suraj Mal he ignited the fire of independence in his region which 'thought smothered for a time, could not be extinguished. And in less than half a century, the Khalsa was able to free the Punjab from the Mughals and the Afghans in 1763-64."²²

In a nutshell, it can be said that Banda Bahadur was an embodiment of piety, courage and sacrifice and he tried to do everything to ameliorate the lot of the toiling and suffering masses both through his charitable disposition and through the grant of lands to the tillers by abolishing *Zamindari*. He removed the fear from the hearts of the down-trodden people and gave them heart to strike against their oppressors. He has earned his well-deserved fame as crusader by his concerted action, daring sacrifice and innumerable heroic deeds. Banda was dead a long time ago, but before his death he had set up the tradition of great ability, great courage, great perservance, great sacrifice,—all directed to the service of down-trodden and oppressed. He had a flame-like quality, a fire within himself which burned and consumed him and drew him relentlessly forward. It made him almost oblivious of all other matters, even the intimate personal relations. He had neither friends nor foes but a mission to fulfil. He did herculean job to achieve his goal but never compromised on his principles.

21. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.

22. Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IX, Part 11, October, 1975, p. 460.

MEDIEVAL SIKHISM : A HISTORICAL ESTIMATE

EUGENIA VANINA*

Lots of research works have been published on the spiritual, philosophical and social teachings of the Sikh religion, its birth, evolution and influence throughout the Indian history. Thanks to the efforts of so many scholars from India and elsewhere, the holy scriptures, lore and didactics of the Sikhs are now available in a number of languages, so that people inside and outside India may learn the message of this creed.¹ At the same time the complex, multi-disciplinary approach to Sikhism, especially to its initial, medieval form, is still wanting. Specialists in history, culture, literature and religion seem to be engaged each in plowing his/her own field and in too many cases to neglect the necessity of bringing their findings together. As a result we have brilliant works on Mughal history and the Sikhs' role in it, on the literature and religion of the Sikhs, but nevertheless we are still confronted by questions like : what was medieval Sikhism as a historical phenomenon ? Why out of the innumerable non-orthodox sects it was the only one that emerged into a distinct religion? What has the Sikh religion given to Punjab and India as a whole?

The purpose of this attempt is to chalk the problem and to suggest some hypotheses for further discussion. This will be done in two dimensions. Firstly, we have to discuss medieval Sikhism as a historical phenomenon and to denote its significance for the history of the Punjab and India as a whole. Secondly, we shall try to situate medieval Sikhism within the broader context of world history of which Indian history has been and is a constituent part.

We shall begin with a well-known fact : Medieval Sikhism as founded by Guru Nanak was a sect which belonged to the *Bhakti* tradition, its *Nirguna* form. *Bhakti* was viewed as a pathway to the Supreme Being by the Hindu scriptures of yore, to name the *Bhagavadgita* first; initially the sincere devotion and love of God was looked upon at best as a path among others (*jnana*, *karma*, *yoga*) or in some cases as subordinate to *karma* and *jnana margas*, as a way which is "better than nothing", easy and more suitable for the lower strata of the society.²

Why and how in different regions of India, beginning from the South, a conglomerate of sects emerged which viewed *Bhakti* as a major and most effective pathway to God, is being discussed by the scholars for quite a long time. For the early *Bhakti* sects the researchers denote as premises the spread of Hinduism and

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1. As for Russia, the present author's home country, among the publications on Sikhism noteworthy are : *Guru Nanak, A Quincentenary Collection of Essays*, Moscow, 1972; N. I. Semenova, *The Sikh State*, Moscow, 1958; L. V. Khokhlova, B. A. Zakharyin, *The Russian Translation of the Janam Sakhis—Moscow University Newsletter*, Series XIII, Oriental Studies, 1991, No. 4, p.38-56. (all in Russian).
2. *The Bhagavadgita*, tr. by S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1948, pp. 48, 59-62, 250, 252.

Sanskrit culture in the South, the assimilation of local cults by the Hindu religion, the necessity to integrate the low castes and tribes into the fold of the Great Tradition and to withstand the competition from Buddhism and Jainism.³ For the later period when the Bhakti sects appeared in nearly all regions of India a different set of reasons may be brought to light, which has a direct relevance to the birth of Sikhism.

The fact that it was in the so-called "Islamic period" of Indian history that the Bhakti sects in Northern India, including the Punjab, began their activities, made it possible for some scholars to suggest that Bhakti there was either the product of Islamic influence⁴ or a shield protecting Hinduism from the Muslim offensive.⁵ It would be contrary to historical truth to negate the influence of Sufism on the North Indian Bhakti sects, including Sikhism or to disprove the objective necessity for Hinduism to take active steps against the growing impact of Islam, especially as concerned the lower castes. But the reasons for the spread of Bhakti ideas in the North deserve a deeper analysis.

There exists a general historical law, relevant to all civilizations, India being no exception. On some stages of historical evolution a discrepancy appears and grows between the socio-economic, political and ethno-cultural development of a given society and the postulates of the "official" religion, its philosophical and ethical norms as well as social order sanctified by it. It was this discrepancy that gave birth to the Reformation in medieval Europe. Same reasons brought to life Bhakti and Sikhism in the North of India.

The ideal caste harmony and observance of the Hindu laws of purity as prescribed by the *Manusmriti* might have never existed at all, but socio-economic, political and ethno-cultural development of medieval India, especially as started from the XIVth -XVth centuries, was in many cases contrary to what an orthodox Hindu was prepared to witness. The growth of urban economy based on trade and crafts, the fragmentation of castes and a number of technological innovations along with labour division in urban industries brought about significant changes in caste hierarchy and uplift in the caste status of traders and craftsmen. Medieval city emerged as a distinct socio-cultural phenomenon also, with its variety of dominating castes, with a multi-ethnic and multi-communal population. People of different castes and faiths rubbed shoulders in the crooked streets and crowded bazaars, in many cases throwing all the regulations of caste purity to the winds—according to the great XVth century poet Vidyapati Thakur, in the city crowds "one's caste mark was found on another's forehead and a brahman's sacred thread was hanging around an untouchable's neck."⁶ It was the urban atmosphere with its variety of castes, creeds, occupations, development of learning in vernacular languages that facilitated critical attitudes to some dogmas of orthodox Hinduism.⁷ In the rural areas also a number of crucial changes was noticeable like the development of agricultural production and its monetization or, what was more

3. M. G. S. Narayanan, K. Velluthat, "Bhakti movement in South India" in S. Malik (ed.), *Indian Movements : Some Aspects of Dissent, Protest and Reform*, Simla, 1978, pp. 45-52.

4. Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1954, pp. 106-108.

5. K. M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History*, Bombay, 1954, p. 143.

6. Vidyapati Thakur, *Kirtilata*, ed. by V. S. Agrawal, Jhansi, 1962, p. 86.

7. S. Chandra, *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1996, pp. 128-131.

important for the subject of our study, economic and social uplift of the dominant land-holding castes; their elite was wealthy and powerful enough to emerge as a significant political force. At the same time there was a social degradation of some brahmans who took to a number of "impure" occupations like trade or serving the nobles, including the Muslims.⁸

The contradiction between the growing self-consciousness of traders, craftsmen and peasants and their low social status in traditional Hinduism had no ways to be solved within the framework of the "official" religion in which only brahmans had a monopoly of sacred knowledge and holiness. If the "official" understanding of God and faith treats you as depressed and impure, while you realize that you are not, then the logical way is to introduce a reformed faith, a newly understood God, who would need no formal rituals and understand "the heart's language" of a sincere devotee, whatever his caste may be. To illustrate this, we may quote from Raidas (Ravidas), the celebrated *Nirguna Bhakti* saint, whose poems were later on included into the *Adi Granth*, thus making him a spiritual predecessor of the Sikhs :

Oh people of the city, everyone knows
That I am a cobbler and a *Chamar* by caste.
But the noble *brahmans* bow to me since
Raidas has obtained protection in the Name.⁹

These were some of socio-cultural premises for the development of Bhakti, and Sikhism as its part, in the North. It was relevant to many regions, the Punjab to be named among the first ones. The Punjab was as if destined by nature and history to emerge as one of the major seats of reform movements in medieval India. This region with its "agricultural fertility rarely equalled",¹⁰ with its peasants, skilled, hard-working and proud, with its populous cities, the centres of flourishing industries and trade was well prepared to give birth to the new teachings. To this we may add some circumstances of even more importance : the Punjab had a long experience of communal amity; it was for many centuries a seat of reformist Hindu sects and Sufi orders. Well connected with the rest of India and the outer world, the Punjab was open to new trends and at the same time it had created its own cultural identity.

This identity was clearly felt even in the early literary works composed in the Punjab like the *Sandesh Rasak*. It accumulated the cultures of all peoples and communities of the region. Even when the Punjabi authors used stories from Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian classics for their poems and *qissas*, they always added local colours and Punjabi realia. Likewise the rich indigenous folk-lore supplied the literature of the Punjab with a mine of stories and aesthetic approaches. It has to be specially stressed that the literature and culture of the Punjab emerged in the Middle ages as a composite one; it equally benefited from Shaikh Farid, the Sikh Gurus and Hindu poets.

The growth of regional cultures and identities was an important process in

8. *Ibid*, pp. 122-128; *The Poems of Tukarama*, tr. by N. Frazer and K. B. Marathe, Delhi, 1981, p. 351.

9. B. Sharma, *Santguru Ravidas Vani*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 90-91; W. M. Callewaert, P. G. Friedlander, *The Life and Works of Raidas*, Delhi, 1992, p. 132.

10. Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. II. Tr. by H. S. Jarrett, Delhi, 1978, p. 316.

medieval India and it deserves a more deep and objective study. It seems hardly reasonable that the history of medieval India is for quite a long time been studied mainly from the viewpoint of first the Delhi Sultanate and then especially the Mughal empire. Although there is a number of high-level scholarly works discussing regional histories and identities,¹¹ these projects are in many cases not fully incorporated into the mainstream of medieval Indian studies; the latter are being still dominated by the "Mughalism" with which Frank Perlin was justified to reproach the Indologists.¹²

Moreover, while the development of regional literatures, cultures and religious cults is viewed by the majority of scholars as something natural for a country like India, the growth of "political regionalism" which in the Mughal epoch resulted in the outbreak of the mighty anti-imperial movements like those of the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Rajputs, etc. has been in many cases estimated as a negative phenomenon which facilitated the collapse of the Mughal state and further anarchy of the XVIIIth century. While the concept of the "Robber States" is not in vogue now, some historians still hardly associate the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats with something but predatory activities, raids and robberies.¹³

It is an established fact that after the breakdown of the Delhi Sultanate there was a considerable development of regional powers, economies, languages, literatures, schools of arts and thought. Such a period was important for any feudal society, for the relatively smaller areas and regions were more suitable venues for the development of money economy, markets, cultures and identities other than caste, community and lineage. Regional identity was thus an inevitable milestone on the road to national identity and this process was a long and complicated one. In France, for example, with its homogeneity of population, people had for quite a long historical period associated themselves with Normandy, Burgundy or Languedoc and only through these with France. Same happened in nearly all modern nation-states; in the countries like Germany and Italy this process came to conclusion only by the second half of the XIXth century.

In India the integration brought about by the Mughal invasion was not a result of the natural centripetal processes in economy, social, political and ethnocultural spheres. Development of regionalism which could have in due course resulted in a new integration, was broken forcibly by the invading outsiders. There is no even trace of communalism in this assumption, for, firstly, both Hindus and Muslims alike suffered from the invasion, as it was testified by Guru Nanak,¹⁴ and, secondly, the result might have been nearly the same if the invader had been a

11. To name just a few : G. Stewart, *The Marathas 1600-1818*, Cambridge, 1993; K. Schomer, J. L. Erdman, D. O. Lodrick, L. T. Rudolph (eds.), *The Idea of Rajasthan. Explorations in Regional Identity*, 2 Vols., Delhi, 1994; J. S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh : Essays in Sikh History*, Amritsar, 1972.

12. F. Perlin, "Concepts of Order and Comparison, with a Diversion on Counter Ideologies and Corporate Institutions in Pre-Colonial India," in T. J. Byres and H. Mukhia (eds.), *Feudalism and Non-European Societies*, London, 1985, pp. 111-115.

13. Vide, for instance : Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1605*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 350-351; Z. U. Malik, "The Core and the Periphery : A Contribution to the Debate on the Eighteenth Century"—Presidential Address, Medieval India Section, 51st Session of *Indian History Congress* (PIHC, 1991), pp. 169-185.

14. J. S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Chandigarh, 1969, pp. 160-161.

Hindu.¹⁵

It was, no doubt, an objective purpose of Akbar's reforms to build a centralized, secular (to be more historical, let us call it proto-secular) and consolidated state. Why, despite great achievements, this effort was not successful in perspective, is a subject of a separate study. What concerns us now was the growth of regionalism in post-Akbar India. This process was something more complicated than the strife of the local elites for power and land control, as some scholars would like us to believe.¹⁶ This strife was a factor, no doubt, but of equal importance was the fact that the *padshahi* became an obstacle for regional political and ethno-cultural forces, for the peasants who suffered from the Mughal incursions and punitive expeditions, for urban traders, ruined by the never-ending internal wars and rebellions. The regional identities, suppressed by the Mughals for some time, and that never in full, began to gain momentum; regionalism, which had not exhausted itself, now demanded its share.

The anti-Mughal uprisings and movements of the XVIIth-early XVIIIth century were characterized by the growing political ambitions of the regional elites, by the genuine patriotic feelings and militant spirit of the masses and, last but not least, by the significant role of the local forms of Bhakti. But there were considerable differences between the regions and consequently between local Bhakti sects. To find out the peculiarity of the Punjab one may compare it with another seat of the anti-Mughal rebellion, Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra local Bhakti saints, especially of the Varkari tradition, contributed to the development of regional culture, language and identity. But it was Ramdas who enriched the Bhakti ideology with the appeal for social activity, dignity and militancy (these ideas were in fact even contrary to the Varkari teaching).¹⁷ However in Maharashtra, but for the narrow coastal stripe, there was no significant development of urban life, industries and trade; the voice of craftsmen and traders, from whose ranks the proponents of radical Bhakti and egalitarian ideas mostly hailed, was not heard or at least played no independent role, local chieftains, rural elite and peasantry were main forces of anti-Mughal struggle; it was but natural for the Maharashtrian Bhakti, never radical in its social demands, to merge fully with the orthodox Hinduism.¹⁸

In this connection the Sikh movement was peculiar to itself. It was initially a regional branch of Bhakti, in its *Nirguna* variety as concerned religion and in its radical form as concerned social ideas. All Sikh Gurus preached equality, castigated the hypocrite brahmans and mullahs, negated caste discrimination. This they did as independent thinkers and at the same time as followers of the great Bhaktas,

15. Discussed in more detail by the present author in : *Ideas and Society in India from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, Delhi, 1996, pp. 139-142.

16. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India, Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 144-145; Gordon Stewart, *The Marathas*, pp. 20-22.

17. T. D. Joshi, *Social and Political Thoughts of Ramdas*, Bombay, 1970, pp. 20-28, 86; Ramdas, *Dasbodh*. Hindi tr. by R. Sharma, Benares, 1956, p. 24.

18. There existed in Maharashtra a radical sect of Mahanubhavas which departed quite far from the orthodox Hinduism, but it was never dominant in people's minds, unlike the Varkaris. For more information vide A. Feldhaus, *The Religious System of the Mahanubhava Sect, The Mahanubhava Sutrapatha*, Delhi, 1983.

especially of Kabir whom they held in highest esteem.¹⁹ It was but logical that the *Adi Granth*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs, included the poems by Kabir, Raidas and other radical Bhaktas.

Sikhism emerged in the Punjab as the radical heresy, first of the traders and craftsmen. It is clearly felt by even the language epithets and comparisons used by the first gurus in their sermons.²⁰ Later on movement was joined by the masses of the jat peasantry. With the growth of the Sikh community the new teaching became more and more interrelated with the developing regionalism; the formation of the Sikh canon and introduction of the Gurmukhi alphabet were especially instrumental in this matter.

At the same time we have to bear in mind that the growing feeling of Punjabi identity along with the alienation from the Mughal empire were in no way identical with the estrangement from India and its culture, even when Sikhism emerged as a distinct religion. It was not only because Sikh communities existed in many places outside the Punjab and the gurus travelled a lot in various regions of India to bring their message to as many people as possible. Sikhism has never severed its ties with either the classical Hindu traditions or with the Bhakti sects from different regions of India, upto the remote Maharashtra whose celebrated son Namdev had been given a worthy place in the *Adi Granth*.

Moreover, it was not by chance that Guru Gobind Singh, who was a merciless critic of Hindu superstitions and the greatest contributor to making Sikhism a distinct religion, freely used Hindu mythology in his writings. He even ascribed the foundation of his lineage of Rama in the *Bachittar Natak*.²¹ This was a strange choice for a spiritual leader who ordered his followers to never worship the Hindu temples and one day himself pretended to do so in order to be punished for this would-to-be mistake.²² Such a choice was illogical at first sight only; the Guru wanted Sikhism to be an independent religion, devoid of many blemishes of Hinduism, and at the same time an inseparable part of the Indian tradition with its mythological roots, lore and values. This instance shows us that medieval regionalism, the one that destroyed the Mughal empire, never implied the alienation from pan-Indian culture.

The peculiarity of the Punjab is, however, in the fact that it was Sikhism that emerged into a distinct faith, while all other regional schools of Bhakti were by and large encompassed by the orthodox Hinduism. It may be discussed in an even wider historical perspective : India has known a number of reformist movements, starting from Buddhism and Jainism and coming to Bhakti. But all of them were either absorbed by Hinduism or vanished from the Indian scene or became confined to a tiny minority.

The point here is that neither of these reformist movements succeeded in creating an alternative pattern of social life and behaviour for the laymen. The latter has to be specially stressed. In the Buddhist and Jain communities it were the

19. M. A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. VI, Oxford, 1909, p. 113.

20. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 20.

21. *Shri Dasam Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, Hindi tr. by Jodh Singh, Vol. I, Lucknow, 1983, pp. 144-159.

22. Surindar Singh Kohli, *The Life and Ideas of Guru Gobind Singh*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 55, 76.

monks who could attain salvation and bliss on the path of renunciation; the lay members were only to observe some general moral requirements, while in the major spheres of social life they remained as they were, in the fold of caste rules and local customs. Bhakti was a great step forward in advocating lay piety; the saints criticized the brahmanical monopoly of divine knowledge and insisted that sincere devotion, not learning of holy texts and ascetic practices was a pathway to God. But at the same time many Bhaktas were of opinion that normal family life, work in order to feed one's wife and children were obstacles thrown by *maya* on the way of devotion; it was not by chance that hagiography had a lot of stories of the famous Bhaktas leaving their families or neglecting their householder duties or even sacrificing their wives and children. Such austerity, however, was for the chosen souls only : all others, inspired by the Bhakti teachings as they were, continued their normal life and observed as members of the society all laws and norms prescribed by Hinduism. Thus at present we see so many followers of Kabir, Dadu and other bold opponents of caste system either as loyal members of the Hindu society or as those who reproduce nearly all features of orthodox Hinduism within their own communities.

It was Sikhism that developed gradually and not without contradictions, an alternative system of social behaviour and set of values for all the adepts, not only for some chosen souls. This process required time and for quite a long periods the Sikhs were viewed by others and by themselves as one of the Hindu sects. The culmination came with the creation of the Khalsa, when Guru Gobind Singh reformed the Sikh community, made it more democratic and introduced new norms of socio-religious conduct which were later on codified by the *rahit-namas*.²³ Thus Sikhism emerged from a Hindu sect into a distinct religion which was, however, never alienated from the mainstream of the Indian culture.

Moreover, to medieval Sikhism India owes a new perception of labour. It is common knowledge that Hindustan with its concepts of ritual purity and caste hierarchy scorned some kinds of manual work irrespective of their social usefulness (sanitation, for instance). Even "pure" occupations like those of a sweetmeat-seller, gardener, jeweller, etc. were looked upon as defiling by the members of high castes. Moreover, agriculture, which provided people with basic necessities of life, shared nearly the same destiny : some "agricultural" castes, mostly forming the land-holding elite, were not allowed to touch the plow's handler. Islam in India had also adopted caste prejudices against "low" occupations; even such an enlightened and formed-looking person as Abul Fazl could not escape from these unworthy feelings.²⁴ This attitude was common for practically all medieval societies where the professions of a priest, a learned man and a warrior were looked upon as the only noble; all others, be it commerce, industry, agriculture or even fine arts (on a professional level) were viewed as low and unfit for a well-born man.

The Bhakti saints with their criticism of bookish knowledge and hypocritical character of priesthood pioneered in bringing along a new set of values. Themselves belonging mostly to trading or industrial castes, they elevated these "low" occupations and sneered at the ideas of purity. For Kabir, Raidas, the untouchable

23. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

24. Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. I, tr. by H. Blochmann, Delhi, 1977, p. 176.

cobbler was a holy man.²⁵

The Bhakti saints were perhaps the first in Indian literature to express in a poetic form the feelings and world outlook of a common toiling man or a petty trader. But the quietism and escapism of so many great Bhaktas, their aversion to the mundane affairs prevented them from working out new ethical norms and bringing them to the people.

Against this background Sikhism has indeed played a pioneering role. To start with, it had been a long-standing tradition in India to revere wandering ascetics, *fakirs* and others who lived by collecting alms. One had to be brave enough to state like Guru Nanak :

That man who calls himself a teacher of truth
And lives by begging, do not pay him homage.
The man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow
And gives some gains in charity,
Knoweth, Nanak, the true way of life.²⁶

This was further reiterated by the successors of the first Guru who insisted that any kind of work, if done honestly and for social well-being, is of God.²⁷ The Sikhs refused to discriminate between the "high" and "low" occupations as they refused to follow the rules of caste purity.

Moreover, of great importance here was the principle of lay piety. Contrary to orthodox Hinduism and even to the teachings of many Bhakti saints, the Sikh religion and social norms offered every adept an opportunity to obtain a harmony of spiritual and mundane life : to work honestly, to provide for a family, to be reasonably well-off and at the same time to seek communion with God by personal devotion (*nam japna*), by honest labour (*kam karna*) and by social service and charity (*vand chakna*). While reading now the sayings of the Sikh gurus you feel that for them there existed no barrier between religion and everyday occupations of a devotee :

Let the fear of God be the bellows,
Let austerities be the fire,
Let the love of God be the crucible,
Let the nectar of life be melted in it.
Thus in the mint of Truth
A man may coin the Word.²⁸

Medieval Sikhism was perhaps the most radical and persistent of all reformist movements of the then India in advocating social equality. It has to be noted that for many Bhakti saints equality meant similar status of all people in God's eyes only. They told the moving stories of Rama's eating fruit from the hands of a tribal woman Shabari or Krishna's feasting in the house of an untouchable Vidura, but were hardly able to announce egalitarian principles as relevant to everyday social life only. Some saints, indeed, were bold enough to negate caste discrimination (we

25. H. Dvivedi (ed.), *Kabir*, Bombay, 1960, p. 231.

26. *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, Tr. by Trilochan Singh, Jodh Singh et. al., London, 1960, p. 116.

27. W. H. McLeod (ed., tr), *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, Manchester, 1984, p. 68; Sher Singh, *Social and Political Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, Delhi, n. d., p. 181.

28. *Selections*, p. 38.

may remember Basava, Kabir, Dadu, Sarvajna, Akho Bhagat and others in this connection). But even Kabir, who stated that "all thirty-six castes are pure"²⁹ could imagine no other social organization but caste. The development of Sikhism, especially with the consolidation of the Khalsa, was indeed a radical breakthrough. The Sikh approach to the problem was multi-dimensional : they preached equality not only in spiritual, but in mundane life; they discarded the principles of ritual purity and allowed every person to be proud of his work, whatever it may be; they elevated the very idea of labour and made it godly to do any kind of work for the benefit of the community, even if this work is, for example, to sweep the Gurudwara. By introducing congregational prayers and *Guru Ka Langar* along with communal messing (even Akbar had to join it in order to meet the Guru) the Sikhs put their egalitarian principles into practical life. Moreover, in his Baisakhi 1699 innovations Guru Gobind Singh challenged one of the pivotal principles of medieval society, i. e. caste or estate-bound attitude to people and their social roles. Caste values presumed that one had to be born as a noble Kshatrya only to be a brave and a proud warrior, a fighter for one's home-land. By creating "the race of the Singhs" the Guru as if initiated into knighthood an army of peasants, traders and craftsmen; all those who had been looked upon as lowborn plebeians and were obliged by their very birth to be humble and cowardly, now found themselves nothing inferior to the noble Rajputs.

Now what was Sikhism as described against the wider background of world history, or, to put it another way, was it comparable to the religious reformist movements in other pre-modern countries ? Some readers may doubt the necessity and correctness of such a comparison, but we feel it useful for two reasons. Firstly, India, its history and culture are, no doubt, unique and valuable for themselves, but at the same time they have been and are an inseparable part of world history and culture of all mankind. Thus India's historical experience is comparable with that of other nations. Secondly, our attempt to juxtapose Sikhism and reformist movements of medieval Europe has a purpose, which is different from the aim of some scholars who compare India and the West in order to present the former as a deviation from the rightful and progressive model embodied in the latter. In our opinion all paradigms of historical development, all kinds of civilizational experience are equally valid and to compare different countries we have to bear this in mind. Such a comparison may help us to denote the general laws of historical evolution and to describe various ways in which these laws manifest themselves in concrete civilizations. The choice of medieval European example is dictated by the fact that the latter is better researched into; it has also to be noted that the majority of terms and notions describing the development of medieval thought and religion, have been worked out on the basis of European material.

It would not be an exaggeration to presume that despite the fundamental differences in religion and culture, medieval reformist movements in India and in the West had many similar features. To start with, all of them were brought to life by the same historical law which made it a necessity to introduce some important changes in religion to make it more adequate to the changes in socio-economic, political and ethno-cultural life. And the approaches of the Indian and European reformers were

29. Kabir, p. 231.

to a great extent the same. They negated all formal kinds of worship, all outwardly sides of religious cult and established as a doubtless priority the inner devotion, based on the mystical direct contact between devotees and God. They stood as if united against idol or icon worship, ceremonies, pilgrimages, asceticism, etc. Sometimes these two approaches, one of the Indian saints and another of the European reformist thinkers, exhibited even verbal similarity. To illustrate, we may recall the utterings of Kabir, a great Bhakta, revered by the Sikhs :

Holy places are but water, there is nothing in it, see.

The image of God is dead, brother, and mute, see.

The Puranas and the Quran are mere words, unveil thy soul.

Kabir judges by experience : all these are but trumpery, see.³⁰

And now the statements made by the Lollards, the British pre-Reformation sect, which belonged to the same XVth century as Kabir : "holy watir halwed be a prest is of no mor effect than the watir of the river or of a welle", "no worship ne reverence oweth be do to any ymages of the Crucifix, of Our Lady ne noon other Seyntes for all such ymages be but ydols and maade be workyng of mannys hands."³¹ (The language is genuine XVth century English-E.V.)

Mystical communion with God was also a pivotal principle of medieval European non-orthodox sects and their Indian counterparts. There existed, no doubt, a variety of mystical ways and practices; while some experiences, for example, of the Krishna Bhaktas were to an extent analogous to those of early Christian mystics like Mechthild von Magdeburg, Origen or Bonaventura, Sikhism with its strict monotheism and aversion to any kind of image-worship was in its mystical approaches more close to the early Reformation thinkers like Sebastian Frank.³² Anyway, this way of mystical communion with God required no intermediaries between a devotee and the Supreme Being; the contact was to be personal and direct, open to every God-seeking soul with no necessity of professional priesthood. "Every Christen man is a prest (priest-E.V.)" said the Lollards.³³ This statement would have been supported by the Sikhs, in whose literature the satirical exposition of the superstitious, greedy and hypocritical priesthood may be looked upon as a worthy match to the biting anti-clericalism of Ulrich von Hutten, Erasmus and other celebrities of the Reformation.³⁴

Both Indian and European reformers were eager to bring changes into the religions which had emerged, each in its own way, into the religions of mere formalities and, in the words of S. E. Ozment, had been featured by "an absence of the institutionally valid lay piety".³⁴ It was equally important for the Sikhs and for the Protestants to teach the common laymen the ways of piety and devotion in everyday life of a craftsman, a trader or a peasant. They proclaimed honest labour and charity as pathways to God. Said Diepold Peringer, a famous German Protestant

30. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

31. N. P. Tanner (ed.), *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-1431*, London, 1977, pp. 57-58, 154.

32. Compare : M. A. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 206; S. E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century*, New Haven & London, 1973, p. 35.

33. *Heresy Trials*, p. 86.

34. S. E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities. The Appeal of Protestantism to the Sixteenth Century Germany and Switzerland*, New Haven & London, 1975 p. 22; M. A. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 240-242, 269.

preacher of the XVIth century : "If you want to find Him, go over to your neighbour's house where small children lay sick and hungry and give them what you would otherwise uselessly squander or sacrifice to some idol."³⁵ Similarly, the Sikhs and many Bhaktas urged their followers to serve God by serving his creatures.³⁶

In their social ethics medieval Sikhs were also very close to the protestants; much like the latter, they elevated labour, urged their followers to scorn no manual work, to choose a reasonable middle course between luxury and renunciation, hedonism and asceticism. For the Sikhs, as well as the Protestants, social ideal was in the image of a honest, hard-working and charitable householder, engaged in some kind of socially useful and profitable occupation and eager to share the fruits of his labour with those in need, a man whose hands are always busy with work and mind absorbed in God. Both the Indian and European reformers considered all people to be equal in God's eyes; some of them were bold enough to refer this idea to social equality as well. But there was a noteworthy difference between Indian and European backgrounds.

In medieval Europe the heretical sects and Reformation preachers availed themselves of the egalitarian principles of the early Christian communities, of the poverty of Jesus and his apostles, of the very doctrinal basis of Christianity, in which a noble knight and a base serf had equal access to the churches, shrines, festivals and all sides of worship with no discrimination between "pure" and "impure" in the realm of religion. The memories of the "good old days" of the primitive semi-tribal life and village communities were also helpful and enabled the reformers to ask "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then a gentleman?". What they wanted to do was to bring the rules of social life in concert with the laws of religion.

In India the situation was different. Neither in the holy books of Hinduism, nor in the contemplations of the sages, nor in the popular tradition could Kabir and Guru Nanak get the idea of social equality. A low caste person was not just socially degraded, he was looked upon as a sinner serving the punishment for his misdeeds in previous birth, as a source of pollution.

This, in our mind, has to be considered by the scholars who reaproach medieval Indian reformers for the limited and non-militant character of their activities, aimed at "individual salvation or mystical union with God" and not at "a change in the living condition of the masses."³⁷ The task of medieval Indian reformers, who came from the Hindu fold, was much more difficult than that of their Western counterparts : the latter had to change the society in accordance with the foundations of religion, while the former had to change the very core of religion and to create an alternative social order. As an Indian, as a man who addressed his message to the masses born in the Hindu fold, Guru Gobind Singh had to be much more courageous than Hussites and Muntser taken together to proclaim brotherhood of men belonging to different castes and to urge them to abandon the rules of caste purity and to eat from one

35. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

36. W. H. McLeod, *Textual Sources*, p. 68; *Malukdas Ji ki Bani*, Allahabad, 1946 p. 22; B. S. Gupta, "Ethics of Guru Tegh Bahadur" in *Journal of Religious Studies*, 1978, VI, pt. I, pp. 133-140.

37. Savitri Chandra Shobha, *Social Life and Concepts in Medieval Hindi Bhakti Poetry : A Socio-Cultural Study*, Delhi, 1983, p. I; H. Mukhia, "The Ideology of the Bhakti Movement : The case of Dadu Dayal" in : *History and Society : Essays in Honour of Professor Niharranjan Ray*, Calcutta, 1976, pp. 450-451.

dish.³⁸ This appeal was for that time a revolutionary appeal indeed; it was met with protest by not only of the orthodox Brahmans, but by some members of the Sikh community itself.

One should bear in mind, however, that all efforts to bring the egalitarian ideas into practical life failed both in India and in Europe, for there was no place in medieval society for such a transformation. Nearly all the communities, founded by the Bhakti saints, by medieval Protestant reformers, etc., the Sikh Khalsa being no exception, either got transformed into separate castes, or became caste-ridden, or emerged into typical medieval communities with traditional hierarchy of guilds and estates. Nevertheless these experiences were in all cases useful for the further development of egalitarian and reformist ideas. It was not by chance that many social reformers of the XIXth and XXth century have paid homage to the preachers of medieval non-orthodox teachings, among whom the Sikh gurus occupied a worthy place, as their predecessors.

There was however a sphere in which the views of medieval Sikhism, as well as those of other fraternal communities and sects, differed in a most dramatic way from the views of the European Reformation. For the Sikh gurus and likewise for many Bhaktas and Sufis, all religions were equally true and valid paths to the Universal God, the one and the same for the whole mankind, albeit worshipped by people under different names. Dissimilar ways and languages of worship, ceremonies and epithets, holy canon and places of pilgrimage—all these were looked upon as a part of the formal, outward religion which had nothing to do with "God's secret." The Sikh gurus joined the ranks of those medieval saints and free-thinkers who denounced religious strife, bigotry and fanaticism. They spared no harsh words to castigate the hypocritical Brahmans and Mullahs who, in the words of Bhai Gurdas, "spurning the truth, destroy one another in malicious feud."³⁹ It was a habitual practice for the founder of Sikhism to use both Hindu and Muslim religious terminology in his preachings, to address the followers of both communities. With the growing process of religious self-determination of the Sikhs, their literature became more critical to both the communities, to the unreasonable and obsolete practices of Hinduism and Islam. For example, the other reformers of that age were also very close to the deliberations of the free-thinkers and "enlightened philosophers" like Abul-Fazl, Faizi or Dara Shukoh.⁴⁰ At the same time he preached fundamental unity of mankind, insisted that Hindus and Muslims "belonged to the same caste, the caste of men" and in a beautiful hymn depicted people of all creeds and ethnicities worshipping together the Absolute God.⁴¹

Thus there was no surprise in the fact that the tenth Guru of the Sikhs was revered by so many Hindus and Muslims alike, that a Sufi Pir joined him with his followers to fight against the Mughal empire. Above mentioned fact should be considered by those inside and outside of Punjab, who try to present the Sikh tradition as communalist and hostile to other creeds.

Against this background one has to note that in medieval Europe the Reformation and official Catholic church were equally fanatical and intolerant to the

38. M. A. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vols. V-VI, pp. 93-94.

39. W. H. McLeod, *Textual Sources*, pp. 63-64.

40. *Shri Dasam Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, Vol. II, pp. 693-99.

41. M. A. Macauliffe, Vol. V-VI, p. 275; *Hindi Kavya Pravah*, Allahabad, 1964, p. 689.

followers of other religions. Each of them had a sinister record of the "heretics" burned at stakes and "unbelievers" massacred. For their Protestants only their faith was of God, all others were of Satan and had to be destroyed.⁴² Even the most liberal and daring minds of the Reformation and Renaissance in Europe were not ready to acknowledge for the non-Christians the right to worship God in their own way. Tolerance and freedom of worship advocated by the Western humanists and reformers concerned Christians only; all others were to be damned as "pagans" and brought to the "true faith" by carrot or by stick. The Sikhs share the honour with other preachers and free-thinkers of India to be the first proponents of universalism and genuine tolerance in the history of the whole world; in India they may be looked upon as the predecessors of what is now known as secularism.

Comparing Sikhism with the Reformation movements in Medieval India we may note that there were similar features not only in approaches and socio-ethical teachings, but in the very character of evolution. Medieval Sikhism was, as we have already seen, a socio-religious reform movement and at the same time an ideology which was instrumental for the development of regional identity feelings and the ideology of anti-Mughal struggle—these three aspects of medieval Sikhism were responsible for the support of this movement by many non-Sikhs of the Punjab, including the Muslims. Looking for a historical analogy, we may recall the Hussite movement in the XVth century Bohemia (Czechia), one of the mightiest in the early history of European Protestantism. Both the movements emerged as a combination of liberation war, religious reform and social protest; both began with peaceful sectarianism and turned militant after the martyrdom of their spiritual leaders (Jan Hus of the Hussites and Guru Arjan Dev of the Sikhs); both were featured by conflicts between radical and moderate elements (the followers of Guru Gobind Singh versus the opponents of his reforms, the radical Hussites versus the moderate Calixtines); both reflected the growing sentiments of regional identity and opposition to the foreign domination (anti-Mughal struggle of the Sikhs and anti-German of the Hussites); social composition, doctrinal approaches and ethic values also had much in common. Both the movements tried, and equally in vain for that period, to implement their social ideals in the "liberated zones" like the Tabor mountain of the Hussites and Anandpur Sahib of the Sikhs.⁴³

Thus, to conclude, medieval Sikhism as situated within the framework of the Indian history itself, was a socio-religious reform movement which had emerged as one of the non-orthodox Hindu sects but in due course demarcated itself from Hinduism, created an alternative social model and religious system without alienating itself from the mainstream of the Indian culture. For the Punjab itself it was instrumental in building up regional ethnocultural identity, literature and language; this identity has from the very beginning been a part and parcel of the pan-Indian civilization.

Medieval Sikhism was distinguished by dialectical unity of two contrasting elements : loyalty to parental traditions and innovative spirit. A constituent part of the Bhakti tradition, it carried forward the message of Kabir, Ravidas, Dadu, etc.,

42. S. E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 50; L. Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation*, New York, 1985, p. 368.

43. For more details, vide by the present author, *Ideas and Society*, pp. 129-33.

but enriched the reformed religion with the appeal for social activity and militant opposition to the tyrants. The Sikhs shared fundamental values of Indian philosophy and religions, but came forward with the new patterns of social behaviour, attitudes to labour and everyday life, ethics and moral norms. Their teaching reflected the feelings of regional identity, the rich cultural legacy created by the sons and daughters of the Punjabi soil and at the same time there has been nothing alien to the feelings of Indianness, as it has been demonstrated by so many patriots and freedom fighters, who hailed from the Sikh community. In the XVIIth century the Sikhs were active participants of the anti-Mughal struggle; their movement was to a great extent identical with those of the Marathas, the Rajputs, etc., but the Sikh ideology was distinct from the Rajput militancy and the Maharashtra *dharma* due to the fact that Sikhism had very strong ideas of social protest.

Against the background of general history of the world, Sikhism may be identified as a movement, similar in many aspects to the European Reformation. Same features were characteristic of many reformist sects of medieval India, and this fact alone refutes the widespread notion of that society as backward and stagnant in comparison with the West. But of all these sects and communities Sikhism was perhaps most radical, persistent and innovative to the credit of the land which had given birth to it, the land of the Punjab.

HARI SINGH NALWA

LT. COL. GULCHARAN SINGH (RETD.)*

"THE FAME OF THE WARRIOR LIVES FOR EVER"

(Bhai Gurdas)

General Hari Singh Nalwa was the most celebrated and distinguished general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the great Ruler of the Punjab kingdom. Like his master, the General was also born (1791) at Gujranwala, a town now in Pakistan; his career also has largely been contemporaneous with that of the Maharaja. Hari Singh joined the Lahore service as a personal attendant of the Maharaja and rose to the great heights of being a great nobleman as well as one of the renowned generals of his time.

Hari Singh, the only son of his parents, was only seven years old when his father, Sardar Gurdial Singh, died in 1798. His further up-bringing then became the responsibility of his maternal uncle who, in 1801 had "Pahul" (Sikh baptism) administered to the young boy. He was given instructions both in Panjabi as well as in Persian languages. Although given no proper training in the art of warfare, even then by the time he was fifteen the enterprising lad had learnt almost all the prevailing arts of fighting and had become an excellent rider, a good shot and deft in the wielding of the sword.

Every year on the occasion of Basant Panchmi, the Maharaja used to hold a *darbar* at Lahore lasting ten days, when the young men were expected to show their fighting skills. At one such *darbar* held in 1805, the young Hari Singh impressed the Maharaja with his sword-play, and the latter took him as his A. D. C.¹ Once, Hari Singh accompanied the Maharaja for a hunt in the course of which a tiger siezed the young Hari Singh, but the latter managed to get himself freed and then beheaded the animal. His title of "Nalwa" is connected with this incident.² The Maharaja pleased with this act of bravery, gave Hari Singh the command of a small force.³ This was the beginning of his military career.

The first expedition the young Nalwa participated in was the one launched in 1807 for the capture of Kasur, a town west of the Satluj river and now in Pakistan. Here, he distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and Ranjit Singh created him a "Sardar", awarded a *Jagir* worth Rs. 30, 000 of yearly income and also gave him the

*196-R, Model Town, Jalandhar City.

1. Prem Singh, *Hari Singh Nalwa* (Panjabi), pp. 37-38.

2. Another version is that Hari Singh was very generous and used to give alms on a large scale. For this generosity he was compared with Raja Nal known for charities, and thus called Nalwa.

3. Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafar Nama Ranjit Singh*, p. 31.

command of 800 cavalry. In 1810, he led an expedition to Sialkot. When the two days fighting proved of no avail, the young Hari Singh took a flag in his hands and with his usual courage and dash rushed to the fort, scaled the fort wall and planted the Lahore flag on the fort ramparts. The army followed him and the fort was captured. In the same year, he accompanied the tribute collecting expedition to Multan. During the siege of Multan, Hari Singh went forward with the party sent for mining one of the fort walls when a burning fire-pot hit him; he received serious burns and took many months to recover.

The Tiwanas of Shahpur known for riding and good horses, had started incursions into certain parts of the Lahore territory. The verbal warnings having failed, Maharaja Ranjit Singh despatched Hari Singh (February 1812) to deal with the Tiwanas. The Nalwa, on arrival at Mitha Tiwana, the capital of the Tiwanas, laid siege to it. The defenders put up a stiff resistance and the fighting continued the whole day. By the same evening the Tiwanas situation had become hopeless. Now Hari Singh sent a message to the Tiwana Chief pointing out the hopelessness of his position and promising to ensure a safe conduct if he surrendered. The Tiwanas accepted the terms and immediately evacuated the town. Hari Singh occupied the Mitha Tiwana fortress and annexed the whole territory to Lahore *darbar*.

Having dealt with Tiwanas, Hari Singh was ordered to settle the affairs with the "Pir" of Uch, near Multan. The Sardar razed their fort to the ground, subdued the "Pir", collected a sum of Rs. 25, 000 and returned to Lahore.

In 1813, Hari Singh accompanied Diwan Mohkam Chand to Attock and participated in the battle of Hazro (Haidru) against Wazir Fateh Khan. In 1814, he accompanied the Kashmir campaign as one of the subordinates.

During the 1818 final campaign launched for the capture of Multan, he was in command of a division and was mainly instrumental in the capture of the citadel. (Prior to arriving at Multan he had captured Khangarh *en route*.) When the fort walls were breached the Akalis rushed into the fort. Hari Singh and Sham Singh Attariwala followed the Akalis and took part in the hand to hand fight that ensued.

During the same year, a civil war broke out in Kabul. The Afghans were busy fighting amongst themselves, leaving the Peshawar Valley weakly guarded. Maharaja Ranjit Singh took advantage of the situation and led his troops for the capture of the Peshawar Valley. Hari Singh Nalwa was one of the commanders who accompanied the Maharaja. The force passed through Rohtas, Rawalpindi, Hassan Abdal (Panja Sahib for Sikhs) and arrived at Hazara. It crossed the Indus river, occupied the tribal strongholds of Khairabad and Jahangira; thence they marched towards Peshawar and entered the city in November 1818. The governorship of Peshawar was bestowed on Jahan Dad Khan and the troops returned to Lahore.

In 1819, when the final campaign for the occupation of Kashmir was launched, Nalwa again commanded a division. He reached Pir Panjal via Kot Dharal. Then he took a significant part in the battle at Shopian in the Kashmir Valley. Kashmir occupied, the Nalwa returned to Lahore. In 1820, he was appointed the governor of Kashmir in place of Diwan Moti Ram, and held the appointment till October 1821.

In October 1821, Ranjit Singh diverted his attention towards Mankera whose Nawab had earlier supported the Tiwanas. The Maharaja crossed the Jhelum river

and advanced towards Khushab and thence he went to Kundian. Mir Diwan Chand followed the Maharaja. General Hari Singh, who had now been replaced as the governor of Kashmir by Diwan Moti Ram, was also ordered to join the expedition. The General with a force of 7,000 men and considerable treasure left Kashmir and proceeded via Muzaffarabad and Pakhli. When he reached Mangli (Mangal) (now a ruined place) in the area of Pakhli, he found more than 25,000 Hazarwalas (Jaduns and Tanaolis), instigated by Mohammed Khan, the Turin Chief, collected to intercept the Nalwa.⁴ The Sikh chief first parleyed with them, asking only for a free passage, but the Hazarwalas demanded a toll on all the Kashmir goods and the treasure he was carrying. On this the Nalwa decided to fight his passage through. So he took up a position, reconnoitered the area and the next day attacked the tribes. The battle lasted the whole day and in the evening the tribes were defeated. The tribes lost about 2,000 men killed, and their chief Mohammad Khan fled to the Srikot hills. The Jaduns saved their villages by paying a fine of Rs. 5.50 per house.⁵ The Nalwa lost only 180 men. The General then resumed his advance and after two weeks joined the Maharaja at Mitha Tiwana.⁶ The Maharaja congratulated Hari Singh for the good work done in Kashmir and also for the victory at Mangli and gave the General a sum of two lac rupees as a prize.

The force now was divided into three parts, with one column under Hari Singh; each column entered Mankera territory by a different route. Capturing various places *en route* all the three columns rejoined near the town of Mankera. Mankera was besieged, with the Nalwa's force being on the west of the fort. The western wall collapsed under the artillery fire and the General with his men entered the fort when a hand-to-hand fight took place. The Nawab took shelter in his *harem* which, out of respect for the women folk, was not touched by the Sikhs. Shortly, the Nawab accepted the terms offered to him, and he along with his family members was allowed a safe passage. Besides, a *jagir* was granted to the Nawab in Dera Ismail Khan area.

The Hazara area was a troublesome bit of land where occasional insurrections on the part of the locals kept on taking place. As a result, a few Sardars had been killed here. Hence it needed a competent and a strong man to control the turbulent people. So, in early 1822, the Maharaja appointed Hari Singh as the governor of Hazara. He remained there for about two years and put down all the "fanatical outbreaks with an iron hand." He started building the fort and city of Haripur. He also built a fort at Nawan Shar, garrisoned it and proceeded to lower Hazara and brought with him Bostan Khan, a relative of Mohammad Khan.

While holding this appointment, the General was often sent across the Indus to deal with the tribesmen in the Peshawar Valley. For example, there was some trouble over Peshawar and over 25,000 Khattak and Yusufzai tribesmen had gathered to fight for "victory or martyrdom." To deal with them, the Maharaja sent a strong

4. *Gazetteer of Hazara District*, 1883, p. 24.

5. In spite of the persistent misconduct of the Turin Chief, Mohammad Khan, he was a few months later received by the Maharaja at Lahore, and a *jagir* worth Rs. 20,000 conferred upon him (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

6. Syad Mohammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 425.

force under a galaxy of generals including the Nalwa. The advance column marched under Prince Sher Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa. The column crossed the Indus over a bridge of boats and captured the fort of Jahangira.

The Maharaja followed in easy stages. On reaching the river, the Maharaja found the bridge destroyed and the Sikh force across the Indus besieged. Now, by sheer determination the Maharaja forded the flooded river along with his force and took the enemy by surprise. The latter retreated and occupied a place called Pir Sabak or Tibba Tiri (at Nowshehra) between Jahangira and Peshawar. The Lahore army, about 45,000 strong, also advanced to the place and on arrival there divided itself into two parts: one part under Hari Singh was kept on the south bank of the river Landa to contain Azim Khan, the Kabul ruler, and the other portion under Ranjit Singh went across the Landa river to its north bank to attack the Afghans. The battle took place on 14th March, 1823. The Afghans were defeated and were convinced of the superiority of the Panjabi arms. Now the Afghans made haste for Peshawar and thence, through the passes, retreated towards Kabul. Ranjit Singh entered Peshawar. This victory established the Maharaja's authority over the region between Peshawar and the Indus river.

In 1824, the Maharaja leaving Nalwa "...the ideal Sikh soldier, rough but dependable, gallant and genuine, and the most dashing of all Ranjit Singh's generals...with the difficult and dangerous Peshawar command,"⁷ himself returned to Lahore. Hari Singh stayed there for a few months to help Yar Mohammad Khan in the administration of the area and then returned to Hazara. In this difficult command he "displayed the utmost activity combined with soldierly qualities of the first order."⁸

No sooner the Nalwa left for Naoshehara, the Turin Chief raised the banner of rebellion. He beleaguered the new town and fort of Haripur built in 1822-23.⁹ The Tanaolis stormed the Darband¹⁰ and the Shinkiari forts killing the garrisons at both the places. The Swathis siezed a number of Hindu women, sent them to Tikri and Nandihar and forcibly married them to Mohammadans. They also besieged the Nawanshar fort but the Nalwa had returned in time; he relieved the fort and "defeated the besieging Jaduns with much slaughter."¹¹

Hari Singh then built a fort at Mansehra. After this he raided Agror, Tikri and Nandihar and slaughtered the Swathis. After seven days he returned by the Konshglen to Shinkiari carrying with him about 1,000 Swathis women and children. The latter were exchanged with the Hindu women the Swathis had held in captivity.

Having the forts at Shinkiari and Galli (Shergarh) repaired and re-garrisoned, he himself returned to Mansehra. Now he moved against Sarbuland Khan, the Chief of Pallal, who had closed the passes through Tanawal to Northern Hazara. At

7. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, p. 229.

8. *Peshawar District Gazetteer, 1931*, p. 50.

9. *Hazara District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 213.

10. The Sikh forts at Darband, Khari, Kadirabad and Tarbela were destroyed by the May 1841 floods in the Indus (*Ibid.*, p. 30).

11. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Darwaza, the Sardar took the Pallal Chief by surprise and defeated him. The Chief's eldest son Sher Mohammad was killed during the fight. The Chief along with his men fled to Sri Kot hills and joined Mohammad Khan, the Turin Chief.

All the chiefs by now had collected at Sri Kot with about 15,000 men and closed the passes by felling trees and placing big rocks. Hari Singh Nalwa decided to reduce the road block. So, in October 1824, he, with 8,000 men advanced towards it, but was defeated by Saidkhanis and Mishwanis at Nara situated at the mouth of the pass leading to Sri Kot.¹² He lost about 500 men and himself barely escaped with his life. Shortly, he recovered from the wounds and suddenly fell upon Bagra and put to the sword everyone found armed in the area. This belied the story then current that the Nalwa had been felled at Nara.¹³

After this Hari Singh Nalwa attacked Sri Kot simultaneously from a number of different points and captured it. Thence he advanced to Tarbela, crossed the Indus and burnt Khabbul and Kaya. The Tarin Chief, Sardar Mohammad Khan was captured and executed (1825).¹⁴ To control the tribes, the Nalwa constructed a fort called Harkrishangarh;¹⁵ he also constructed a town near it and, called it Haripur—it is still known after the General's name.

The Nalwa then diverted his attention towards the Karral hills. He despatched one column under Mahan Singh via Bagra, up the Nillan Valley, and himself led another column via Chaihr hill to Sajkot. The chief, Hasan Aki Khan submitted without fighting and was given Nagri Makol and other adjoining villages in *jagir*. The Sardar built a fort at Nara "to secure his hold on the Karral country." Leaving Mahan Singh in charge of the country Hari Singh himself left for Lahore.

In the Sardar's absence, Bostan Khan, a nephew of Mohammad Khan, the Turin Chief then in Jail at Lahore, and holding a *jagir* worth Rs. 1,000 of yearly income had started creating trouble in the Sri Kot hills. On hearing of this, the Nalwa immediately returned and quelled the outbreak without much difficulty. He siezed the persons of Bostan Khan Turin, Mohammad Khan Turin, Jalal Khan, the Dilazak Chief, the two principal Mishwani Malliks, and Sheikh Jadun. The General had paid Rs 55,000¹⁶ to the Maharaja for the person of Mohammad Khan, the Turin Chief in order to do his will on him. The Turin Chief, Mohammad Khan interred in the Kallar fort in the Khatar country was poisoned with salt," and the other chiefs were blown by guns by Mahan Singh under orders of the Nalwa.

The Nalwa also, had had the Mishwanis vacate the Sri Kot hills, and they for

12. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Sardar Mohammad Khan, Tarin, was one of the ancestors of Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the one time President of Pakistan. In his autobiography, *Friends not Masters*, the Field Marshal writes that the Sikh rule "was not acceptable to Sardar Mohammad Khan, so he was thrown into a dried-up well. He was fed on salted bread and was given no water to drink : he died of thirst and starvation, but refused to yield to the Sikhs" (p. 3).

15. Hugel visited this fort during his journey through the Lahore kingdom. The General being away, the traveller could not see the Nalwa. However, he met the General's ten years old son (*Travels*, p. 206).

16. This amount the Nalwa "recovered by levying Rs. 2½ per house on all Hazara, the Pakhli country included" (*Hazara District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 27.)

five years "suffering great distress, and living trans-Indus wherever they could get shelter."¹⁷ In 1830, the Sardar accepted their pleas and allowed the Mishwanis to return to their homelands; the latter gave no trouble to the Sikhs administration till 1846. Hazara was quiet. The "Sikh forts were established all over the country, not excepting the tract which now constitutes the Cis-Indus territory of the Nawab of Amb."¹⁸ The disorganisation of the government at Lahore and the subsequent chaos and blood-shed after the Maharaja's death, tempted these people to raise their heads again.

In 1827, there took place another tribal rising; this time a big revolt in the frontier area, raised by one Syed Ahmad Shah. The Syed had come to the Peshawar Valley from Bareilly (U.P.) through Sind, to organise a *jihad* against the Sikhs. Within a few months of his arrival the Syed was able to gather a large number of armed tribesmen including the four Barukzai Sardars. With his fanatic followers he then marched towards Naoshehra. On his arrival at Naoshehra, the Syed found the Sikhs fully prepared to meet him. Hari Singh had also been reinforced with another force under Budh Singh Sandhanwalia who was then located in the Khairabad fort. The opposing forces¹⁹ met at a place called Saidu and a bloody battle took place. The Afghans were defeated. The running foe was pursued by the general relentlessly as, in the words of Von Clausewitz, the "real heroes only—such as Charles XII, Marlborough, Eugene, Frederick the Great—added a vigorous pursuit to their victories when they were decisive enough."²⁰ Hari Singh had followed this dictum here as well as in many another battles and can easily be included in the list of these heroes. In early 1831, the General had to leave these operations to Prince Sher Singh who finally killed the Syed at Balakote on 6th May, 1831. With this ended the Syed insurrection.

In April 1831, the Nalwa formed a member of the Lahore deputation sent to Shimla to wait upon the Governor General in India. During the return journey, Hari Singh left his companions and himself went to Anandpur Sahib to pay homage.²¹ Later, in October, he also attended the meeting held at Ropar between the Maharaja and the British Governor General in India. The meeting concluded, the Sardar returned to Hazara.

The Gakhars had been active supporters of the Syed and had helped him with men and provisions.²² To teach them a lesson, the Nalwa diverted his attention towards these rebels and ruthlessly dealt with them. And, in order to maintain control in the area, he built a fort at Khanpur, the capital of the Gakhars. Painsa Khan Tanawali who had been with the Sardar throughout these operations, was awarded a *jagir* in the area of Amb-Darband. In 1838, as a result of the lawlessness of Shah Wali Khan the Mandla Gakhar Chief, Hari Singh attacked him and annexed

17. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

18. *Ibid.*

19. According to Burnes and Barr, the fight was between 8,000 Sikhs and 1,50,000 tribal.

20. Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Vol. i, p. 297; a "victory is nothing without exploitation—and ruthless pursuit." General Tucker, *Approach to Battle*, p. 380.

21. Wade to Princep, 12th May 1831, No 137/5 Panjab Government Records.

22. Sardar Hari Singh "evicted the Gakkhar chiefs from the Khanpur *ilaga*, on the plea that their *nazranah* was in arrears," (*Hazara District Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 29).

the Dhund hills (Danna *ilaqa*). The Danna fort built to dominate the country was garrisoned with 400 men. The Dhunds remained quiet till 1846.

At the end of the year, Hari Singh raided Agror, evicted Pinda Khan's men from the valley and garrisoned the fort at Kulukke with his own 300 strong men. He also built two more forts, reprovisioned the others at Unar and Indus and returned to Haripur via Kirpilian.²³

By now the Lahore rule had been well established in Hazara. Hari Singh who had succeeded in subjugating Hazara was recalled to Lahore for consultations. He was then appointed the Governor of Peshawar, as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Lahore forces in the area. From Lahore the Sardar returned to Hazara, left Mahan Singh, one of his subordinates, in charge of the affairs there and himself proceeded to Peshawar.²⁴

On hearing this, the Barakzai Chiefs evacuated their families and valuables to the hills and were themselves ready to flee when and if the situation so demanded. Between Peshawar and Chamkani, Haji Khan and his brother Mohammad Khan tried to check the advancing Sikh force, but were thoroughly mauled, and when they tried to flee were captured. Hari Singh resumed his march; on arrival at Peshawar he found all the gates of the city closed. He immediately issued orders to surround the city. The Kachehri gate was blown off and the force introduced into the city. After a fierce hand-to-hand fighting the Pathans fled towards Takal and Shekhan. By 6th May, 1834, Hari Singh was in complete occupation of the city including the famous fort of Bala Hissar which he re-named as Sumergarh. The Afghan Chiefs fled to the hills and Peshawar was annexed to the Lahore Kingdom.

The annexation of Peshawar, Timur and Shah Shuja's winter capital, came as a bitter blow to the Afghan pride. Dost Mohammad, who had always considered Peshawar to be a dependency of Kabul did not like it, was smarting and "suffering from a sense of shocking disappointment on this account."²⁵ He approached the British to mediate between him and the Sikhs and to restore Peshawar to him but all to no avail. He was even willing to become a dependent of the British. They, however, refused to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Lahore Darbar. Dost also tried to obtain Shah of Persia's help but failed in this effort also. He approached even the Amirs of Sind. But who being conscious of Ranjit Singh's power declined to help him against Lahore Darbar. Thus the Dost and Ranjit Singh were left to themselves to decide the issue. As these negotiations were going on, Dost had already ordered preparations for an advance towards Peshawar; letters were sent to all the tribes to join the *Jihad*. In spite of the over-whelming number of Afghans, Hari Singh with 20,000 was keen to decide the issue with the Dost in battle. But he had to defer it because of the repeated Royal commands from Ranjit Singh.

Meanwhile, the Maharaja also had reached Peshawar by stages and himself taken over command of the operations. He advanced towards the Dost's camp, kept

23. *Ibid.*

24. In 1836, the Karral Sardars of Sataura (on the Harro), recipients of a *jagir* from Lahore Darbar, rebelled and besieged the fort at Nara. Mahan Singh crushed the rebellion and placed 100 sepoy in the fort. The grants of the Chiefs were resumed.

25. Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, iii, p. 248.

him engaged in negotiations and, unnoticed by the Dost, deployed his forces in the form of a horse shoe. The Nalwa's position was in the Taihkhal Bala area. The Dost realising his hopeless situation decided to withdraw without giving a battle.

Hari Singh now busied himself in consolidating the Sikh power in the Peshawar Valley. He carried out a thorough reconnaissance of the territory right up to the Khaibar Pass, the region termed by many a travellers as "the very home of battle, murder and sudden death."²⁶ He also reconnoitred the various routes leading to Peshawar. In October 1836, he captured the important Afghan fortress of Jamrod, located eight miles west of Peshawar, and four miles east of the eastern mouth of the Khaibar Pass. Here he found a *kachchi garhi*; realising its importance he decided to construct a strong fort and named it "Fatehgarh."²⁷ He put two regiments of *beldars* on the construction of the fort the foundations of which were laid on 17th October, 1826. The fort-walls were four yards thick and twelve yards high. A huge well was dug inside the fort which was also stocked with provisions and ammunition. For its protection he placed a garrison of 800 infantry, 200 cavalry, 10 large and 12 light guns. He called up Mahan Singh from Hazara and appointed him as its *Sarhad-dar*, considered to be an important post. He built a number of other forts also at the strategic points in the area. Some of these were as under :

- (a) Between Jamrod and Peshawar, known as Burj Hari Singh; garrisoned with 100 men;
- (b) At Bara, garrisoned with 800 infantry, 100 cavalry and 3 guns;
- (c) At Michni on the Kabul river. This fort commanded the routes from Kabul and had a garrison of 300 infantry, 100 cavalry, two heavy guns and two light guns. Bachittar Singh son of General Dhanna Singh was made in charge of the fort.
- (d) Fort Shabkadar, also known as Sikhan-di-Dheri. This fort guarded three routes: one from Bajour, the other from Kabul to Hashtnagar and the third through the Mohmand area. The garrison here comprised of 500 infantry, 300 cavalry, 2 heavy guns and 10 light guns. The fort commander was Sardar Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia. This fort played a significant part during the battle of Jamrod in 1837.

From Attock to Peshawar, high towers were erected at an interval of two *kos*. The forts at Attock, Jahangira and Khairabad looked after the area. Ranjit Singh had found some solution for the troubled frontier area.

Hitherto, writes Olaf Caroe, "known mainly as a daring cavalry leader along

26. A. Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, p. 166.

27. Alexander Burness, who visited Peshawar after the death of Hari Singh describes the fort in these words : "It is a square of about 300 yards, protecting an octagonal fort, in the centre of which is a lofty mass of building which commands the surrounding country. This fort is dependent on the mountain streams for its water, which the Afghans can and do dam up. At the time of our visit they were sinking a well, which they had carried to the depth of 170 feet without coming to water; but from indications in the soil, it was expected to be soon reached, and has since, I am informed, been obtained, but not in abundance. Even with these defences the position will be a troublesome one as both the Afreedes and Khyberees consider it meritorious to injure the Sikhs." (*Journey to Cabool*, 1842, p. 105.)

28. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

the Indus and in Hazara, the impetuous Sikh general now became a household word in and around Peshawar. *Ragle Hari Singh*—Hari Singh is here—was the bogey called up by distraught Khalil and Mohamad mothers to quieten fractious children."²⁸

Dost Mohammad Khan, the Kabul Amir, having been outgeneralled and outwitted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Shekhan in 1835, had retired to Kabul as a disappointed man. After some time, when sufficiently consoled, Dost re-opened negotiations with the British, but failed to elicit any support from them. Then he approached Persians for the same purpose, but there too he did not succeed. Disappointed he tried to come to terms with Ranjit Singh. He was very keen to establish his family influence at Peshawar that he was even prepared to become a tributary of Ranjit Singh. On the other hand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not like Afghans to have an alliance with the British and was keen to attract Dost towards himself. The Maharaja gave Dost some hopes and in turn asked for gift of horses to which the Dost could not agree as it would have signified his holding Kabul at Ranjit Singh's pleasure involving further loss of face. The negotiations broke down and Dost Mohammad decided to resort to arms. The recent defeat still rankled in his mind.

The fort at Jamrod and the chain of other forts built by the Nalwa in the area and the forward policy adopted by him, had created perturbances in Kabul; it made Dost Mohammad Khan apprehensive of the Sikh designs. He considered it as a first step, a prelude to further advancement through the formidable defile towards Kabul. The direct control of Dera Ismail Khan also had increased Dost's apprehensions as the threat now came from a new direction, the distance between Tank and Kabul being sixty *kos* only.²⁹ Dost, although not wanting to embroil himself in a war with the Sikhs, was also keen to check their further advance towards Jalalabad. He asked the Maharaja to evacuate the Khaibar region, but without any tangible results.³⁰ The Dost decided to fight.

The marriage of the Maharaja's grandson, Prince Nao Nihal Singh with the daughter of Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala was to take place during the month of March 1837. And to be present on the occasion Nalwa had withdrawn a major portion of his force from the Peshawar region and despatched it to Lahore. Also, this was the time when the Nalwa himself was lying sick at Peshawar; Jamrod was lightly held by Mahan Singh with a small force of about 600 men and four guns. The situation encouraged Dost who considered this was the right opportunity offered to him to avenge his previous defeats, as well as to throw the Sikhs out of the Peshawar Valley.³¹

When the Nalwa heard of these war-like preparations on the part of Dost, the

29. Another route was through Kurram Valley (Shaturgarden) from where Kabul was over 50 miles. During the Second Afghan War, in late 1877, Lord Roberts had advanced up the Kurram Valley 60 miles long and 3 to 10 miles broad.

30. It is said that some acrimonious correspondence had also passed between the two chiefs, each talking about the distrust on the other.

31. In the beginning of 1837, through Jamrod to Jalalabad to see Mohammad Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammad Khan. *En route* he saw the weak defences of the Jamrod fort, and instigated Dost Mohammad Khan to attack it. (Mackeson to Wade, 15th November 1837; *Punjab Government Records*.)

former sent a message to Lahore for the return of his troops sent to Lahore to attend the marriage celebrations. The report reached Lahore on 26th April and unfortunately came in the hands of Dhian Singh who intentionally delayed in producing it before the Maharaja.

Dost Mohammad, although he himself remained at Kabul, despatched (April 1837) a large force³² under Mirza Sami Khan. The Mirza was accompanied by five sons of the Dost: Mohammad Afzal Khan, Mohammad Akbar Khan,³³ Ghulam Haider Khan, Mohammad Azim Khan and Mohammad Akram Khan.

Sami Khan reached Landi Khana on 24th April. Here he exhorted Afridis in the name of Islam, gave them cash prizes and was thus able to collect about 20,000 tribesmen including a number of important chiefs such as Khans of Mohmand, Bajaur, etc. On the 27th Sami Khan resumed his advance.

He divided his force into two parts. One column was despatched towards the fort at Shabkadar, held by Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia, with two objects: firstly, to contain its garrison so that no force could be detached from here and sent to reinforce Jamrod; and secondly, the capture of this fort would open the direct route to Peshawar. The other portion (main body) made for the fort at Jamrod, reached there on the 28th and laid siege to it.

The Afghans carried on incessant bombardment of the fort walls the whole day. Whatever damage was done to the walls during the first day was repaired by the Sikhs during the following night. The next day, the Afghans recommenced bombardment. Also, a number of times they advanced to assault the fort but everytime the attack was repulsed. The enemy now cut off the water supply of the fort. By the evening, considerable damage had been done to the fort walls, but the Afghans, though superior in numbers did not assault the Sikh position anymore. Most probably their intention was to let the besieged use all their provisions and then compel them to surrender. The next day of the siege also passed off; neither the Sikhs received any reinforcements, nor the fort surrendered. At night possible repairs to the walls were carried out. The next day when the fort walls had been extensively destroyed, the Sikhs entrenched themselves in its ruins and continued fighting.

When the news reached the Nalwa at Peshawar, he, unmindful of his health, got ready to proceed towards Jamrod. The great general sent another message to Lahore expressing his surprise at the non receipt of reinforcement, and himself with 6,000 foot, 1,000 regular cavalry, 3,000 irregulars³⁴ and 20 pieces of artillery advanced towards Jamrod.³⁵ He was prepared to fight on the plains, but if the enemy retired

32. Syed Waheed-ude-Din's figures are 25,000 men and 18 heavy guns (*The Real Ranjit Singh*, p. 107); Lepel Griffin gives 7,000 horses, 2,000 matchlockmen and 18 guns (*Ranjit Singh*, p. 214).

33. Akbar Khan was the most warlike of the Dost's sons; later, he played a significant part in the British retreat from Kabul in 1842, a "Signal catastrophe" for the British.

34. Lepel Griffin, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

35. Before leaving, the Sardar is supposed to have uttered these words; "To-day is *lkadshi* day, and such good days seldom occur so opportunely. To day I have to oppose the Afghans and thus to justify the truth of my fidelity to the Maharaja and the repayment of old favours shown to me." (Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, iii, p. 404.)

without giving a fight he would join the besieged and buck them up.

On his arrival, the Afghans who were at the verge of taking the fort, discreetly lifted the siege and leaving behind three guns retired into the Khaibar Valley. The Sikhs followed the enemy and both sides took up positions there. Nalwa waited for seven days, and, seeing no activity on the part of the enemy, decided to fight. The Nalwa employed a strategem in that he feigned retreat and thus brought the enemy out of the safety of the hills into the plains. Then on 30th April, 1837, he first attacked the Afghan divisions under Naid Amir Akhundzada, Mulla Mohammad Khan and Zerir Khan Arz with his wonted vigour, broke their ranks, inflicted heavy casualties on the Afghans and captured fourteen of their guns. The Afghans began to flee in great dismay. The division under the Dost's sons, except the one under Mohammed Afzal Khan (about 2,000 strong) who showed a bold front, also fled. The Sikhs pursued the enemy. The Afghans by now had received reinforcements; thus induced, the fleeing Afghans returned to check the Sikh pursuit. The two parties of Afghans under Nawab Jabbar Khan and Shuj-ud-Daula Khan, who had fled, also returned and coming from different directions charged the Sikhs and drove them back; the Afghans were even able to recover two of their lost guns. Hari Singh "... emulating his master at Nowshera fourteen years before, was everywhere amid his retiring and rallying forces, striving to hearten them in the difficult operations."³⁶

At this critical moment, the 56 year old intrepid Nalwa, who never hesitated to take personal risks, made a gallant and dashing charge on the enemy. He was seriously wounded: "He received four wounds, two sabre cuts across his breast, one arrow was fixed in his breast which he deliberately pulled out himself, and continued to issue his orders as before, until he received a gunshot in the side."³⁷ He turned his horse towards the fort; while his life was ebbing he commanded that the news of his death should be kept secret until the arrival of the expected reinforcements from Lahore. This was done in order to keep the enemy under the impression that the Nalwa, whose very name was a terror to them was still alive. While his life was ebbing he asked how the battle was going and whether the Afghans were beaten; and when told they were he said: "I am so happy." The battle had scarcely ended that the Nalwa breathed his last. Like Nelson at Trafalgar, (October 1805), Sir John Moore in the Peninsular (Spain) War, won the battle and lost his life; he died "in the hour of victory." The guns paid him the funeral honour. Kadaryar a Panjabi Muslim bard has so nicely described the scene in Panjabi verse. "The pitcher had been carried once too often to the well."

In Nalwa, the Maharaja lost his "most courageous and loyal lieutenant and an able and experienced counsellor." The Afghans were able to recover all their lost guns but were unable to capture the Jamrod fort; neither any of the other two forts were captured by them as planned. The death of such a brave leader, disheartened the Sikh troops but meanwhile, the promised reinforcements had arrived. The reinforcements also included field batteries which from Ramagar on the Chanab

36. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

37. Wood to the Governor General, Indian P.C. 59, 29th May, 1837.

river had hurried to Peshawar covering a distance of over 200 miles in six days which speaks for the administration and speed of movement of the Maharaja's troops. The Afghans were compelled to retire to Dhaka and thence to Safed Koh and Kabul.

The diversionary force under Haji Khan launched to capture the fort at Shabkadar did not fare any better, and likewise was compelled to withdraw.

The Afghans lost about a thousand men killed and failed to capture Peshawar and the three forts they had planned to capture. Their only success was the killing of Hari Singh Nalwa, that great general whose name alone was worth *sawa lakh*, i. e. a hundred and twenty five thousand men. "It was," writes N. K. Sinha, "the death of this great warrior which was responsible for making the battle of Jamrod a theme of exultation among the Afghans and it was this sad accident that cast a gloom over the Panjab."³⁸

Peshawar remained a part of the Sikh empire; or rather its possession by the Sikhs was confirmed. But it was an expensive victory, purchased at the cost of so brave a soldier, "that flower of Sikh chivalry," Hari Singh Nalwa. To the Maharaja, Nalwa's death came as a shock and he openly expressed his grief on the loss of such a jewel of the Sikh Raj. On this occasion, the Lahore Darbar news-writer made the following entry in his *Roznamcha* :

The Maharaja felt very grieved on hearing dreadful news and his eyes became wet with tears while talking about the fidelity and sacrifice of the said Sardar (Hari Singh) from the beginning to the end of his career.³⁹

For a moment Ranjit Singh contemplated invading Afghanistan. "Anger, pride and sorrow for a time overwhelmed him but when he regained his composure he thought no more of it."⁴⁰

On the part of Dost Mohammad, it was an all out effort : he had even staked his whole family. But this defeat disillusioned him about his power against the Sikhs. "The Afghans," writes Jacquemont, "were really just strong enough to have an occasional brush with Ranjit Singh and nothing more." Besides the death of the Nalwa, the only other consolation for Dost Mohammed was that his army had come out of the Khaibar hills without a serious disgrace.

On the other hand, had the Sikhs been defeated with Jamrod their retreat to Attock would have been made miserable by the Khataks and other tribes, numbering between 6, 000 to 8, 000 armed men,⁴¹ who would have welcomed such a god sent opportunity. Peshawar Valley would have most probably been lost, thus limiting Ranjit Singh's western frontier along the Indus. The defeat would have shattered the invincibility of the Sikh arms and encouraged the Afghans to launch further attacks across the Indus. Kashmir would also have been endangered. All this was negated by this victory—the greatest achievement denied to Indians for eight

38. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 101.

39. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 397; "When the king (Ranjit Singh) became aware of this news, his mind became upset with the excess of grief. He shed tears from the eyes of soul and heart in the memory of Hari Singh, the veteran soldier."

40. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

41. Burnes, *Cobool*, p. 107.

centuries. An impossibility was converted into a possibility. The Punjab territory was extended to its rightful geographical boundary in the north-west. Ranjit Singh became powerful and his hand was sought for friendship by the big nations.

The General was cremated in the Jamrod fort where a monument (*smadh*) was raised to his memory. A portion of his remains was sent to Gujranwala and kept in the Baradari, the Nalwa had had built earlier. Later, a *smadh* was constructed here also.

After Hari Singh's death, his son, Jawahar Singh was given an appointment commensurate with his capabilities. Jawahar Singh, writes Lepel Giffin, "who was a great friend of mine, inherited all his father's valour, and it was he who led the splendid charge of irregular cavalry against the English at Chillianwala, which so nearly turned the victory into a catastrophe."⁴² Sometime in June 1831, the Maharaja granted Jawahar Singh a *jagir* worth Rs 20,000 at Chalyar.⁴³

II

Hari Singh Nalwa was a self made man; it was through his own skill, efforts, hardwork, intelligence, daring and boldness that this orphan, starting at the lowest rung of the ladder reached the top. This leader of outstanding ability, trained in no school of instructions but on the field of battle itself, became one of the most skillful and celebrated generals of his time.

He was an handsome man of impressive personality, fairly tall, with a broad chest, lofty forehead and attractive eyes. He was an excellent shot, dexterous in the wielding of the sword and a rider of quality who could sit on the horse-back for hours. He was a soft-hearted person who could be ruthless when the occasion so demanded. He was a man of resolution, enthusiasm and possessed great self-control. He dominated the events that surrounded him, and never for once let the events have the better of him. He was a cool-headed person, and never allowed his success go to his head. Even Pathans who hate his memory "are fair to acknowledge his bravery and skill."⁴⁴ He was very brave and the most dashing of the Maharaja's generals. Sir Lepel Griffin is full of praise for this unique personality; according to him the Nalwa "was not only the bravest but the most skillful of the Maharaja's generals, and was employed to command all expeditions of exceptional difficulty."⁴⁵ He calls him Murat of the Khalsa.⁴⁶ He was not a theoretical or a chair-borne soldier, but a practical general, a man of the battle-field.

Clausewit writes : "there never was a general who was wanting in boldness."⁴⁷ And this chief was not wanting in this quality. Wade, in a letter to the Maharaja once said that Nalwa was a big Sardar who was a bold and daring man, and "none appeared to be so brave, courageous and wise as he."⁴⁸ He was often bold even to the point of recklessness. He was always ready to fight and win, without counting

42. Lepel Griffin, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

43. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii, i, p. 52.

44. *Peshawar District Gazetteer*, 1931, p. 50.

45. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

46. Murat was one of Napoleon's famous generals known for the qualities the Nalwa possessed.

47. *On War*, iii, p. 184.

48. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 406.

the odds against him. He was known for taking personal risks and was consequently wounded, often seriously many a time. It was his boldness during the battle of Jamrod that cost him his life and the country a great general. But, on the other hand, had the Nalwa not gone to Jamrod, the fort would have fallen to the enemy with dire consequences. "The paths," Grey has remarked correctly, "of glory lead to the grave." Like a true soldier the Nalwa died on the battlefield. "He has left behind him a tradition of bravery and skill that time cannot obliterate. He is the greatest celebrity in Sikh history as the chastiser of the unruly Pathans."⁴⁹ He subdued the turbulent Pathans, was dreaded by and had become a legendary figure for them. In the Frontier region he became a terror. For every Panjabi ambushed or sniped, the Nalwa took strong reprisals by destroying villages near which crimes were committed. This resulted into peace descending on the tribal land. The Afghan mothers even now repeat "*Haria Ragle da*" (Hari Singh is come) to frighten their naughty children.⁵⁰ "Tribesmen," writes Olaf Caroe, "who boasted they had never within memory yielded more than a nominal and temporary submission even to Mughals or Durrani had actually suffered in open battle at the hands of the unbelievers."⁵¹

This brilliant soldier was not a fortune seeker. He remained loyal to his profession, to his country, and to his sovereign. His loyalty remained untarnished, beyond even a shadow of doubt. He was ever ready to comply with his master's commands, "for he believed that the felicity of both the worlds and honours of both the lives (in this world and hereafter) depended upon that."⁵² After the Nalwa's death, Ranjit Singh once remarked that "the deceased Sardar was no doubt a wise and a mature man, yet he consigned his life to the Creator by showing bravery and courage and added that though he did not spare anything, even his life, to prove true to the salt of the Maharaja."⁵³ The Maharaja was justified when he said that the Nalwa was a great *Nimak hilal* i.e. true to the salt. The Maharaja had the greatest regard for this brave soldier, the greatest general of his creation.

The Nalwa, next to the Maharaja himself, was the most respected person in

49. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

50. "There was scarcely a village, from the head of Lundkhwar Valley to the Indus, which was not burnt and plundered by this celebrated commander. In such awe were his visitations held that his name was used by mothers as a term of affright to hush their unruly children. But lately old grey beards were alive to point out the hills over which they were chased like sheep by the Singh, and men still show where their fathers fought and fell" (*Peshawar District Gazetteer*, 1897-98, p. 70). The Mughals and Marathas had also followed the policy of desolation i.e. burning of villages, cultivation, etc. (J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, pp. 116-17.) Even the British while operating in the North-West Frontier followed these methods. Advancing towards Kabul during the Second Afghan War, Brigadier-General J. A. Tyler gave orders "to loot and burn everything....—an order we 'rather' liked—and we set to work with a will." Lt Col. MacRae, *Regimental History of the 45th Rattray's Sikhs*, Vol. i, p. 199.) As for the Marathas, "everyone whose appearance indicated the probability of his possessing money was immediately put to the most horrid torture...It was their common practice to burn and destroy what could not be carried away" (Princep, *History of Marquess of Hastings*, Vol. i, pp. 38-39, reproduced in Sarkar's, *op. cit.*, p. 365, fn.).

51. *The Pathans*, p. 302.

52. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii, i, p. 17.

53. *Ibid*, iii, iv, p. 398; "In order to show his own importance, he did not allow seats to any Sardars, excepting Hari Singh and Kharak Singh, in the presence of British officers." (Wade to Princep, 21st July, 1831, *Panjab Govt. Records, Lahore Darbar*, p. 283.)

the Lahore Darbar. He was popular with the army, the men loved him indeed. And the Nalwa, on his part, looked after his men and took genuine interest in their welfare. He was personally known to his troops; he was aware of their capabilities : what they could do and what they could not do. The troops had implicit faith in him—victory or defeat mattered little. Defeat, when suffered, must have been due to reasons beyond his control, they would think. During battle, this leader of great personal mobility, this man full of energy, this versatile commander, fertile in resources and prompt in action used to be everywhere with his troops, encouraging them, exhorting them to fight. His presence, whereas it encouraged his own troops, was demoralising for the enemy. He realised the importance of the leader's presence on the battlefield among his troops; he knew that it built confidence in his troops. Such leaders are almost always successful. Had he been alive at the time of the First Anglo-Sikh War, undoubtedly the outcome would certainly have been different; and the so-called Second Anglo-Sikh War may not have taken place.

This statesman-soldier was a believer in the "forward policy"—he was in favour of checking the enemy at the gates i.e. the passes in the north-west range of the hills. The annexation of Peshawar and the building of new forts at the important places in the area were the result of this policy. Another reason was the fear that once the Afghans got established themselves at Kabul, they might make this project difficult for the Lahore Darbar. He did not think very high of the Afghans, a fact he never concealed; not did he hide his intentions of extending the Sikh rule beyond Peshawar.⁵⁴ With this aim in view, he acted in the most important part of his plan and annexed Tank, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. According to Burnes, Hari Singh siezed Dera Ismail Khan in order to establish a communication zone along the banks of the Indus. And also, as Wade thought that "The siezure was intended to threaten Dost Mohammad Khan from a new quarter less difficult of access than Peshawar, while at the same time protected the centre of the Panjab from any invasion of the Afghans when they might be employed in strengthening and consolidating their power in Peshawar."⁵⁵ Hari Singh advanced further and established another post as forward as Jamrod, where in 1837 battle against the Afghans he lost his life.

As is well known, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very generous in rewarding his chiefs and Sardars. The Maharaja had granted the Nalwa a *jagir* worth about eight lakhs of rupees, and as per the custom of the day, the Sardar was in return required to maintain a fixed quota of infantry (two battalions) and artillery for which he had to spend about four to five lakhs of rupees. This force was in addition to the irregular horse and foot the General might have had. Besides, the Nalwa was awarded *jagirs* and *inams* for his good deeds and victories in battles. For example, for his victory over the Syed, Hari Singh was awarded a sum of Rs. 50,000. When the

54. When Hari Singh was appointed in Peshawar for the first time, Dost Mohammad Khan made an offer to him to fix the boundary at the Khaibar Pass. But the Nalwa, who had his eyes on Jalalabad and Kabul, spurned this offer (Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii. iv. 409).

Note : It is said that a European General—a colleague of Hari Singh presented him an orange plant from Malta which he grew in Gujranwala and thus these oranges were named '*malas*' and the town became very popular for red-blood *malas*.

55. Quoted by N. K. Sinha in *Ranjit Singh*, p.112.

General died, he had left with the bankers a sum of Rs 3,37,000⁵⁶ and his *jagirs* as per records included Hazara, Phulki, Dhatoor Khanpur, Kolra, Kachhi, Bannu, Kalarghar, Nurpur, Mitha Tiwana, Chalyar and the territory of Gujranwala.⁵⁷ But the land grants to his Sardars were not given away permanently by the Maharaja; these were confiscated on the former's death. Similarly, when Nalwa died all his estates were confiscated.⁵⁸

Although Hari Singh Nalwa was a brave and an excellent soldier, his honesty in money matters was not beyond doubt. He was known to have appropriated money in the name of unexecuted raids. And whenever asked to account for the money given to him he was unable to do so. Most probably the money was spent on such state matters which could not be disclosed to all and sundry. But there are instances of his being punished by the Maharaja for certain other acts. For example, once he was heavily fined for not keeping his battalions up to the strength. "But it must be said," writes N.K. Sinha, "in favour of Hari Singh that his conduct was in keeping with the notions of service morality in those days and in spite of such lapses Hari Singh must be regarded as a very faithful and trusted servant, far superior in every respect of many other people in the service of Ranjit Singh."⁵⁹

He was the most distinguished member of the Maharaja's Court. For his education and knowledge of political affairs, he was often sent on diplomatic missions. In 1831, at Shimla, Lord William Bentinck, the British Governor General in India, received a diplomatic mission from Lahore that was comprised of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and Diwan Moti Ram. Hugel writes that "During his diplomatic mission at Simla, his conversation with most people consisted of a real exchange of ideas and references. His questions proved him to have enough of thought and reason : justly he is well informed about the statistics of many of the European States, and on the policy of the East India Company, and what is very rare among the Sikhs, he can both read and write the Persian language. He puts a variety of questions taken down on a paper."⁶⁰

Religiously, he was a devout Sikh. He had a good knowledge of *Gurbani* and often quoted verses from the *Guru Granth Sahib* while addressing the troops. On his ring he had the words "*Akal Sahai*" engraved in Gurmukhi script. In 1832, Wolff, a missionary traveller passing through Jahangira (a place between Neoshehra and Attock) met the General on 30th May when both had some discussion on religion. The traveller was impressed with the General's knowledge and his devotion to his own religion. Later, he wrote that Hari Singh is a devout man...and is just in

56. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, iii, iv, p. 409.

57. *Ibid.*, iii, iv, p. 405.

58. This practice was prevalent during the Mughal times also. The French traveller Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who visited India a number of times during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, says that "when a great noble dies the King inherits his property and his wife only remains mistress of her jewels" (*Travels in India*, vol. i, p. 18). In 1614, when the Governor of Surat, a nephew of the Mughal Emperor was murdered, "Shah Jahan, who reigned then, having heard the news, was not in the least distressed, because he inherited the property of all his subjects..." (Tavernier, *op. cit.*, i, p. 54.) Jahangir and Aurangzeb also followed this practice. (V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, pp. 374 and 428.)

59. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

60. *Travels*, p. 255.

his dealings."⁶¹ Although a devout Sikh, the General had great respect for other religions also. Whenever in authority, he permitted all to pray in their respective fashions. In Hazara, when he constructed the fort and city of Haripur, he had also built a *gurdwara*, a *masjid* and a temple. Incidentally, even his own *jagirs* were managed by a Muslim; and in his command he had the Sikhs, Mohammadans and also Hindus. In 1832, Hari Singh had a number of improvements carried out at the Panja Sahib Gurdwara, a place of historical importance to the Sikhs. He also, attached to this Gurdwara a *jagir* worth about Rs. 500,00, in Khura Khail in Attock district.⁶²

The top-most storey of the Akal Takht standing opposite to the Golden Temple, Amritsar and the gold-plating of the whole building was got done by General Hari Singh Nalwa. For this purpose the General had handed over gold worth Rs 1, 25, 000 to one Giani Gurmukh Singh and also promised to provide more gold if so required. But no sooner the General died than the Giani misappropriated the whole quantity of the gold donated by the General. To punish the Giani for this distrust, Raja Hira Singh had the former interred in a latrine where he was tortured to death. The Giani's property was confiscated and on search of his house the misappropriated gold was recovered and later used for the gold-plating of Akal Takht.⁶³

This brave and skillful soldier was a rare case among the Sikh Sardars in that he was well educated. He could read and write fluently in Panjabi as well as in Persian. He could also converse in Pushto, the language of the North-West Frontier. Therefore, one wonders why the General has left no record of his life, especially of the campaigns undertaken by him. But, if he did write something, it has not come to light.

He was very frank and affable in his manner and conversation.⁶⁴ According to Masson both the General's department and intrepid conversation resembled those of the Maharaja. He was a man of sharp intelligence and good memory. He was a knowledgeable person and knew a lot about many European and other countries. He was very fond of drawings and paintings. Hugel, an Austrian traveller who had visited the Nalwa, found the Sardar in possession of some very beautiful drawings. The Sardar presented the traveller with a copy of his portrait in the act of killing a tiger.⁶⁵

In the Lahore Darbar, the General was more inclined towards Prince Sher Singh; he was not in favour of Prince Kharak Singh becoming the heir apparent, as he had gauged the capabilities of both the princes much earlier. Consequently, he was not on cordial terms with the Sandhanwalias, the protagonists of Kharak Singh. However, Prince Nao Nihal Singh, Kharak Singh's son had received his military training under Nalwa's supervision.

61. Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Laboures*, p. 259.

62. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, p. 159.

63. Giani Gian Singh, *Tarikh Sri Amritsar* (Panjabi), p. 66.

64. Hugel, *op.cit.*, p. 254.

65. The scene of Hari Singh's killing the tiger was, on orders from the Maharaja, painted by one *pandit* Bihari, and a few copies of this painting were presented on the Nalwa. Prem Singh, *Hari Singh Nalwa* (Panjabi), p. 39.

Originally, Gujranwala, the birthplace of both the Maharaja and the General, was a small village, a place of no importance, but when its charge was given to Hari Singh, the place was greatly improved. He "built a high mud wall round the town; also a fort to the north of it, surrounded by a ditch. Inside the fort there is a fine 'baradari', and a house after the English fashion, where the Sardar used to live."⁶⁶ When Barr visited Gujranwala in 1839, he saw the late General's three-storeyed house, "one of the prettiest Eastern houses I have seen."⁶⁷ The traveller also saw a building near the "Naobat Khana" where Hari Singh used to keep his tigers. Although the General was known to possess four tigers, Barr found only one living, which "though handsome animal, was not particularly large, and had only been in captivity for two years."⁶⁸

The Nalwa was not only an excellent general, he was also an able, efficient and a successful administrator. Whether it was in Pakhli and Damtor, in Kashmir, or in the most difficult region of the North Western Frontier he quitted himself well. He had the distinction of being the governor of two provinces and both times had received the honour of striking coins in his name—a rare distinction.

During Diwan Moti Ram's governorship of Kashmir, a large amount of revenue remained to be collected. When the Nalwa succeeded the Diwan as the governor of Kashmir, the first step he took was to warn people to pay in the arrears of revenue and that anyone failing to do so would be severely punished. He also warned the Kashmiris that anyone obstructing the smooth functioning of the Government would be punished too. Thus, the results were encouraging. Everyone cleared their arrears of revenue. The only exception being the two leaders : Raja Ghulam Ali Khan Khakka and Zulfikar Ali Khan Babba on either bank of the Jhelum river. One day the General pounced upon them, captured both the leaders and despatched them to Lahore. This treatment served as a good lesson to others. Later, he strongly dealt with the rebellion at Baramulla, and imposed a fine of five rupees per family as an indemnity.

The General carried out a number of social reforms in Kashmir. For example, he discontinued the system of forced labour (*begar*) which had been prevalent there since the tenth century. Hindus, previously forbidden the use of shoes, turban, or any other type of headgear, were permitted the use of these articles. He also announced that those who had previously been forcibly converted could re-convert themselves to their original faith; but in this he does not seem to have succeeded.

In the economic field, grazing tax was reduced and grants were given to improve the wool industry which had deteriorated since the Mughal times. Uniform weights were introduced. The growing of saffron was encouraged by reducing the rates of

66. Shahamat Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52. (Shahamat Ali visited Gujranwala in early 1839, when along with Wade he was on his way to Peshawar). The Historic *bara-dari*, Nalwa's residence at Gujranwala, was occupied in 1889 by Sir Michael O'Dwyer as the settlement officer of Gujranwala District. It had a pleasant garden, a tennis court; also had ample accommodation for servants, and stables for a dozen horses, O'Dwyer discovered the house "still haunted by the ghost of a favourite young wife said to have been poisoned by a superseded rival." Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I knew It*.

67. Barr, *Travels*, p. 134.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

land revenue. There was a time when Kashmir paper had no equal, but the industry had nearly vanished under the Afghans. Hari Singh revived this industry too. "Tora" tax levied on births, marriages, etc. was discontinued.

For the ease of administration, the province of Kashmir was divided into twenty *parganas*; there were twenty collectors, ten *thanas* and 400 inhabited villages.

Improvements in the administration of Kashmir were carried out by Hari Singh to such an extent that many Kashmiris who had earlier left the Valley now returned to their homeland. The Maharaja was so pleased with the Nalwa's Kashmir administration that he permitted the General to strike coins in his own name—a rare honour. The rupee thus minted was known as "Hari Singhi" after the General's name. On one side of the coin the words "Sri Akal Jio" were engraved, and on the other side was written "Hari Singh" in Gurmukhi script. The coin remained in use in Kashmir till 1890 A. D.

Even the British praised the Nalwa's work in Kashmir. On 18th March, 1813, Wade, no friend of Hari Singh or of the Sikhs, commenting on the administration in Kashmir, wrote to the Governor General: "He (Hari Singh) was formerly entrusted with the Government of Kashmir which he held for two years proving himself one of the most able and popular Sikh governors which the Sikhs have had."⁶⁹

Hazara was an unruly area and the successive governors appointed there between 1813 and 1820 had not been able to restore law and order in the area. A few of them had even been killed. In 1822, Hari Singh was appointed to administer the Hazara area. He suppressed all the insurrections that took place during his time and was able to curb the tribes' activities effectively.⁷⁰ He struck a blow to Hashim Khan, the killer of Amar Singh Kalaan, and annexed his territory. To deal with those who had fled to the hills, Hari Singh built a number of forts at Haripur (Harkrishangarh), Dhamtor, Nawanshahr, Mansehra, Shinkari and Darband. He also built roads in the Hazara region, to facilitate its administration. And thus he was successful in subjugating Hazara.

Later, he was given military command as well as the responsibility of administration of the Peshawar Province; this appointment he held till his death in 1837. In this area, also, he built a number of forts: Machin, Khairabad, Shalkadar, Jahangira, Nara, Darma, Sarna, Maru and many others. There he had a free hand and employed various methods for the enforcement of revenue payments in cash or kind. Because of his policy and the ruthless methods employed by him in enforcing these, Hari Singh became a terror in the Frontier, his very name was dreaded.

The strong methods adopted by Hari Singh in suppressing the Peshawar Valley have been criticised by many unfavourably. But, keeping in view "the turbulence of the lawless tribes and other inhabitants and by the geographical and political exigencies of the situation" these methods were the most suitable. Further,

69. Wade to the Governor General, 13th March, 1831, quoted in *Lahore Darbar*, p. 298; "Bengal Political Consultations, Range, 126 Vol. 25", quoted by G. L. Chopra in *Panjab as a Sovereign State*, p. 165.

70. Once the enemy had hid themselves in grass. The Nalwa had fire set to the grass and thus compelled them to come out and fight in the open. He destroyed the bands, and the area became secure.

Peshawar lying at the outskirts of the Panjab Kingdom, and also being far away from its capital at Lahore, strong handling of the area was necessary; he was justified in adopting such severe methods that proved to be the most effective. Lepel Griffin writes that "Those who have to administer law and maintain order on the North-West Frontier of India must have a quick and heavy hand; and the slow and cumbrous procedure of High Courts and barrister judges is mere folly when compared with the gallop after a criminal, caught red-handed before he has reached his asylum in the hills, a short shrift and the nearest tree."⁷¹ Sinha, commending his work in the Peshawar Valley writes : "Hari Singh has left his impression on history as Ranjit's viceroy on the western frontier, the most difficult charge of a Sikh Viceroy. The robbers slaughtered without mercy, the Kabul monarchy overwed, the turbulent Afghan tribes kept down by his movable columns this was the record of Hari Singh on the Western frontier."⁷² Thus he created a tradition of vigorous and efficient administration in the Peshawar Valley. It is no wonder that the Maharaja once told the Nalwa : "To rule a kingdom it is necessary to have men like you."

Napoleon once said : "In war men are nothing; it is the man who is everything. The General is the head, the whole of an army. It was not the Roman army that conquered Gaul, but Caesar; it was not the Carthaginian army that made Rome tremble in her gates, but Hannibal; it was not the Macedonian army that reached the Indus, but Alexander; it was not the French army that carried the war to the Weser and Iun, but Turenne; it was not the Prussian army which for seven year, defended Prussia against the three greatest powers of Europe, but Frederick the Great." Here, we can add, and without hesitation, that it was not the Panjabi army which turned the tide of invasions from the North-West Frontier, but the great General Nalwa.

An Englishman writing in the *Tit Bits*, a London Weekly, rates Hari Singh as the most successful general in the world, and to be miles ahead of such celebrities as Napoleon, Hindenberg, Kitchner, Duke of Wellington, Changez Khan, Hallakkoo. With meagre resources he produced wonderful results; he Subdued Afghans whereas later, the three British expeditions to Afghanistan had met with disaster.⁷³ And hasn't Clausewitz said, "Only he that does great things with small means has made a successful hit."⁷⁴

It is said that, once Abbas Mirza of Persia questioned Mohan Lal about the courage and discipline of the Sikh army. The reply given to him was : "If Hari Singh Nalwa were to cross the Indus, His Highness (Shah of Persia) would be too glad to retreat to his original Government of Tabriz."⁷⁵ Such was the awe of this man, whose very name was equal to *sava lakh*.

71. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

72. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-77.

73. Quoted by Prem Singh in *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, pp. 314, 316.

74. Clausewitz, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 75.

75. Mohan Lal, *Travels*, p. xiv.

INDIAN HISTORICAL WRITINGS ON DECLINE AND FALL OF THE LAHORE KINGDOM

HARMINDER KAUR SOHAL*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh established the sovereign state in the Punjab which lasted about half a century. The British did not allow the fate of the Punjab to remain in suspense for a long time. They ultimately succeeded in annexing it on March 29, 1849 A. D. As it may be expected, a priori, some modern historians of the Punjab have given the possible historical explanation of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Lahore in their respective writings. However, what is more significant to note is that differences among the contemporary British administrators over the issue of the Punjab annexation have largely divided the historians and scholars in their analysis of the probable factors which led to the dissolution of the Sikh power. Here an attempt is being made to highlight the Indian perspective or viewpoint on the decline of the Sikh power.

Many a modern historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh have held him responsible for the ultimate decline of his kingdom. They include G. L. Chopra, N. K. Sinha, Khushwant Singh, D. R. Sood and B. R. Chopra. They attribute fall of the Lahore Darbar to the inherent weaknesses in the state policies followed by the Maharaja during his reign.

Significantly, the surging nationalistic inclinations located overcentralization as an inherent weakness of a polity during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. For instance, writing in 1928, G.L. Chopra states that Maharaja Ranjit Singh's despotism turned him into "a state in person." In his opinion, the Maharaja is also known to have committed a grave blunder of allowing the acquisition of vast territorial powers and influence to the Dogra chiefs.¹ Writing almost during the same period, N. K. Sinha has stated that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had "completely centralised everything pertaining to his government in himself."²

Even some historians of the post-independence era continue to harp on this theme. For Khushwant Singh, "the Greatest oversight was Ranjit Singh's failure to train his successors who could guide the destinies of the state."³ Within a decade, Ranjit Singh's despotism proved fatal to a nascent state. When he modernised his army in 1822, the financial aspect appears to have been overlooked. Payments to

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1. G.L. Chopra, *The Panjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, 1st ed., 28), pp. 139-40.
2. N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1975 (1st ed. 1933 reprint), pp. 190-92.
3. Khushwant Singh, *The Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1971 (1st ed. 1962 reprint), p. 34.

the soldiers fell in arrears. Thus, according to Khushwant Singh the seeds of indiscipline in the Khalsa army had been sown by Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself.⁴ For D. R. Sood, "excessive centralisation of all powers in his hands" became one of the major causes of downfall of the Lahore Kingdom.⁵ B. R. Chopra considers "concentration of all authority" as an inherent internal weakness of the Sikh State.⁶ Thus, we find consensus among most of the historians of the Punjab over the responsibility of Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the decline of the Lahore Kingdom.

Also, Ranjit Singh's despotism sounded death-knell to the Lahore kingdom in the hands of his weak successors. Writing in the late 19th century, Syad Muhammad Latif, with pro-British leanings, points out that Ranjit Singh's descendents lacked the political foresight and wisdom and their incapacity lost to the Sikhs a kingdom.⁷ Ranjit Singh's death caused not a vacancy but a void" which his weak successors were incapable to fill with. Consequently, "disputed succession encouraged intrigues" and the Punjab become "a scene of the wildest disorder."⁸

Importantly, both Jagmohan Mahajan and Sita Ram Kohli pinpoint Maharaja Sher Singh's responsibility for the decline of the Lahore kingdom. The accession of Sher Singh on January 20, 1841 made "confusion worse confounded," because neither genius nor energy was inherited by the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁹ Khushwant Singh also acknowledges the lack of any one of "sufficient stature to guide the destinies of the state."¹⁰ After Kharak Singh's death on November 5, 1840, "the disputes about succession bred intrigues" which created anarchy in the Kingdom.¹¹ Commenting upon Sita Ram Kohli's *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, Fauja Singh writes that this posthumous work helps to solve some of the knotty problems of the period immediately following of the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Knowing their weakness, Sher Singh and Chand Kaur offered slices of Lahore Kingdom to the British.¹² On the whole, his assessment of this work is that it covers the aspect of annexation of the Punjab in a much better historical perspective as compared to the other published works on the subject.¹³ Sita Ram Kohli lays much emphasis on the weakness and connivance of the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. None of his successors except Prince Nau Nihal Singh possessed the

4. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs (1839-1974)*, Vol. 2, Delhi, 1986 (1st ed. 1966), pp. 5-6.

5. D.R. Sood, *Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1968, p. 110.

6. B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab (1839-45)*, Hoshiarpur, 1969, pp. 422-29.

7. S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab : From the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Time*, New Delhi, 1964 (1st ed. 1889), V, pp. 571-72.

8. N.K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-92.

9. Jagmohan Mahajan, *Circumstances Leading to the Annexation of the Punjab 1846-49 : A Historical Revision*, Allahabad, 1949, pp. 15-18; See also, Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 37 and 66.

10. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 2-3.

11. D.R. Sood, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

12. Sita Ram Kohli, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 and 66.

13. Fauja Singh, "Sita Ram Kohli" (ed. Fauja Singh), *Historians and Historiography of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 234.

ability to control the mutual rivalries of the groups.¹⁴ For H.R. Gupta, "The successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh have been held responsible for making his plans futile."¹⁵

If on the one hand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's successors were incapable to consolidate his kingdom, on the other hand, his court was full of heterogeneous elements which led to strong factionalism after his death due to the absence of his "unifying authority."¹⁶ Jagmohan Mahajan aptly states that Maharaja's death initiated "scramble for power" and within a short time "the factions came to blows."¹⁷ Within the court no one could provide leadership. The weak and selfish elements were to a great extent responsible for the dismemberment of the sovereign state of the Punjab.¹⁸ Khushwant Singh has identified two major factions : the Dogras and the Sikh aristocracy.¹⁹ One thing common among these factions was the desire "to reduce the crown to a mere cipher and become like the Peshwas of the Marathas, the real rulers of the country."²⁰ The Sikh Sardars had been replaced by the non-Punjabis. The Darbar split into many factions fiercely opposed one to the other. After the Maharaja's demise, these factions came to "a head on clash." Sardar Chet Singh's assassination on 27 March 1840 and enforced retirement of Maharaja Kharak Singh provided to be "the first act of a series of violent acts."²¹ D. R. Sood argues that "the Sikh Chiefs hastened their end with their own foolhardy ventures."²² The "hostility between the Dogras and the Sandhawalias worsened the confusion."²³ Court factionalism led to many violent changes of government. They were mainly concerned with the furtherance of individual or family interests. They were not divided on political, ethical or religious grounds. Some of the persons established liaison with the British, which for Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, may be an indicator of the extent to which party politics at the Lahore Darbar had deteriorated.²⁴ H. R. Gupta had also held Maharaja Ranjit Singh's ministers responsible for the decline of the Lahore Kingdom.²⁵

Most of the historians blame the army in one way or the other for the fall of the Lahore Kingdom. The Khalsa army had a very strong *esprit-de-corps* and considered itself as the visible embodiment of the Khalsa. N. K. Sinha followed by D. R. Sood considers Maharaja Ranjit Singh very unfortunate because the able generals of his choice—Mohkam Chand, Diwan Chand and Hari Singh Nalwa—had all died

14. Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court 1799-1849*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 303-04.

15. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs : The Sikh Lions of Lahore (Maharaja Ranjit Singh 1799-1939)*, Vol. V, Delhi, 1991, p. 600.

16. G.L. Chopra, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

17. Jagmohan Mahajan, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

18. N.M. Khilnani, *The Punjab Under the Lawrences*, The Punjab Govt. Record Office Publication, Simla, 1951, p. i; See also, N.M. Khilnani, *British Power in the Punjab (1839-1849)*, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 1-16.

19. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

20. Khushwant Singh, *Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab*, p. 6.

21. Sita Ram Kohli, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 17.

22. D.R. Sood, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

23. B.S. Nijjar, *Anglo Sikh Wars (1845-1849)*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 2.

24. Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *op. cit.*, pp. 294, 303-04.

25. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

during his lifetime. Only "crafty designers or traitors" survived to command his forces. Such an unwieldy army became too powerful for his weak successors to control.²⁶ Maharaja Sher Singh's government lost "all control over the army which had virtually usurped the state."²⁷ The Sikh army had become Praetorian in character, selling their services to the highest bidder. Greed and gold were their watchwords which governed their conduct.²⁸ Maharaja Sher Singh gave concessions to the army. They began to plunder the shopkeepers. The city of Lahore was turned into "a veritable hell."²⁹ Fauja Singh Bajwa, writing on the *Military System of the Sikhs (1799-1849)*, argues that the Sikhs were defeated because "they were led rather misled by the commanders of limited ability and doubtful allegiance." Its control suffered a severe setback after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³⁰ The Sikh army indulged in "foolhardy ventures" and within a decade the Punjab was totally in the British control.³¹ In the scramble for power, the support of the army became a decisive factor. The rival factions tried to win over the soldiers by offering higher wages and gifts and appealing to their sense of patriotism.³² B. R. Chopra calls, "military despotism" as an inherent internal weakness.³³ It became all powerful and even the king maker.³⁴ Coming again to the theme, Fauja Singh Bajwa comments upon the integrity, cohesion and patriotism of the army. They fought with "unique resoluteness" and attributed their defeat to "the treachery of their commanders," As a result, "the national resistance" against the British aggression could not succeed.³⁵ For J. S. Grewal, "the use of the army to decide the issue of succession, had a disastrous effect on the discipline of the army."³⁶ Along with the successors and ministers, the army has been held responsible for the decline of the Lahore Kingdom.³⁷

The British imperialism with trained personnel and vast resources confronted with the Indian states. Writing in the last decade of the 19th century, Syad Muhammad Latif provided justification to the British imperialistic designs. He recognises Maharaja Ranjit Singh's "fidelity" towards the paramount power. But his successors followed "aggressive attitude" towards the British which compelled the British to take up arms." Hence, "the absorption of the Punjab into the British Empire."³⁸ G.L. Chopra states that "the Maharaja had to reconcile the commercial

26. N.K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-92; see also D.R. Sood, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

27. Jagmohan Mahajan, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

28. N.M. Khilnani, *The Punjab Under the Lawrences*, The Punjab Government Record Office, Simla, 1951, pp. 6-7.

29. Khushwant Singh, *Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab*, p. 36.

30. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Military System of the Sikhs (1799-1849)*, Delhi, 1964, pp. 346-53.

31. D.R. Sood, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

32. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 6.

33. B.R. Chopra, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-29.

34. B.S. Nijjar, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

35. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *After Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. IV, V.

36. J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India : The Sikhs of the Punjab*, II : 3, Cambridge, 1990, p. 121.

37. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

38. Syad Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. V.

aspirations of the English with his own military ambitions."³⁹ In the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809, states N. K. Sinha, "the British government was the rider and Ranjit Singh was the horse." "A collision between his military monarchy and British imperialism was imminent and Ranjit Singh's failure was inherent in the very logic of events."⁴⁰

The annexation of the Punjab was envisaged by the British government which adopted every possible means to achieve that end. The impact of the Treaty of Lahore of 9th March 1846 was such that having been territorially mutilated, militarily enfeebled and financially crippled, the British forced the Treaty of Bhairawal on 16 December 1846, in which the British Resident became the ruler of the Punjab.⁴¹ Lord Hardinge weakened the state by depriving it of valuable territory. The British began to mature their plans of stepping in.⁴² Lord Dalhousie saw no reason to hold his policy of annexation.⁴³ Absolving Lord Dalhousie from the blame of annexation, Sita Ram Kohli states that the absorption of the kingdom of the Punjab into the expanding British Indian Empire formed part of a long range programme.⁴⁴ The British won over a section of Sikh Sardars to help them in their imperial designs.⁴⁵ J. S. Grewal states that Maharani Chand Kaur and Maharaja Sher Singh had approached the British with the offer of large slice of the Empire as the price of their support against each other. Even the Sandhawalia Sardars were not alone in cultivating the British in self-interest."⁴⁶

Historians differ on the British policy of annexation of the Punjab. Depending upon the pronouncement of the British officials, Ganda Singh calls it "a premediated act."⁴⁷ However, S. S. Bal does not agree with this thesis. In his view, the British government was not in favour of annexation.⁴⁸ For B. J. Hasrat, Lord Dalhousie took the final step of annexing the Punjab on 29th March 1849, "without any authority from the Home Government" and on 7th April, he "informed the India Board of the *fait accompli*."⁴⁹ The British distorted the facts of their unscrupulousness or duplicity. As a result, the annexation of the Punjab was "in utter violation of international law."⁵⁰

Apart from above-mentioned causes historians have advanced other factors

39. G.L. Chopra, *op. cit.*, p. 139 and 140.

40. N.K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-92.

41. Jagmohan Mahajan, *Circumstances Leading to the Annexation of the Punjab*, pp. 39, 69. See also, Khushwant Singh, *Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1962, pp. 114-15. However J.S. Grewal states that the Treaty of Bhairawal was signed on 22 December 1846 : pp. 3, 124.

42. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, pp. 7 and 55.

43. D.R. Sood, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

44. Sita Ram Kohli, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

45. Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-304.

46. J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, pp 3, 121; *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo Sikh Wars*, Amritsar, 1955, pp. 127-29.

47. Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, Amritsar, 1955, pp. 127-29.

48. S.S. Bal, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-41, 250-52.

49. Bikramjit Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations 1799-1849*, Hoshiarpur, 1968, p 355.

50. Jagmohan Mahajan, *Annexation of the Punjab : A Historical Revision*, New Delhi, 1990 (Revised edition).

that led to the decline of the Lahore kingdom. B. R. Chopra lists lack of constitution; Ranjit Singh's suspicion of chiefs; lack of national character; lack of appreciation for freedom and demoralization of the Khalsa army.⁵¹

For Fauja Singh Bajwa, "the failure of the Sikhs was due to the egalitarian character of the Sikh community."⁵² The issues of Dogra Raj Vs. Khalsa Raj complicated the situation.⁵³ After the Treaty of Bhairawal the state of Lahore became "a protected state for all practical purposes."⁵⁴

The decline and fall of the Lahore Kingdom turns out to be an important event in the history of the Punjab. Almost, all the Indian historians have commented upon this theme. Broadly speaking, five issues come to the surface : responsibility of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; weak successors; court factionalism; role of the Khalsa army and the designs of the British imperialism. Indian historians tend to balance these factors with a view to provide an objective understanding of the decline and fall of the Lahore Kingdom, yet the debate is going on.

51. B.R. Chopra, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-29.

52. Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, pp. V. VI.

53. Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-04.

54. J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 124.

MAHARAJA SHER SINGH AS SEEN BY BABA PREM SINGH HOTI

MANDEEP KAUR SAMRA*

Baba Prem Singh Hoti began writing books on the history in the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. He chose to work on biographies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors for he was, like many other Sikhs, proud of the fact that the Maharaja had carved out a vast Kingdom which to him was a 'Khalsa Raj.'

Baba Prem Singh Hoti wrote *Jiwan Britant Maharaja Sher Singh* which was published in 1951 at Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana. This book contains twenty-one picture plates and 230 pages. It is divided into 88 chapters. In preface to the book Hoti has efficaciously drawn picture of Sher Singh's and his minor son's tragic murder by Sandhanwalia Sardars. He claims to have used certain *Roznamcha* and *Akhbarat* manuscripts¹ which according to him either had not been used earlier or if used, not so thoroughly and profusely. Hoti claims that Maharaja Sher Singh's heroic deeds as well as his grim mistakes have been recounted as never done before. He also makes claim to have brought forth certain fact about the history of Lahore Kingdom which were unknown earlier.² Certainly his was the very first effort to bring forth a biography of Sher Singh in *Gurmukhi*, so far there was no work done solely on Sher Singh.

Baba Prem Singh begins the biography of Maharaja Sher Singh by telling us about his birth and parentage. Sher Singh was born on 4th December, 1807 to Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Rani Mahtab Kaur, his first wife. Hoti and Latif are of the opinion that Sher Singh was born in December 1807, whereas Sohan Lal Suri's account says that after receiving the news of prince's birth, Maharaja decided to leave for Amritsar as he found hilly area too hot, arid and deserted to stay any longer.³ There was great rejoicing on the occasion. Here Hoti mentions on the occasion of christening of the prince a darbar was held by the Maharaja and *khillats* were granted to many chiefs. He does not make any effort to refute the remour of

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1. Maulvi Ahmed Baksh Chisti, *Roznamcha*; Mohammed Naqi Khan Peshawari, *Sher Singh Namah*; Bakht Mal, *Khalsanamah*, *Lahore Akhbarat*, British Records, etc.
2. Baba Prem Singh Hoti, *Jiwan Britant Maharaja Sher Singh*, Ludhiana, 1951, pp. 7-8 (Hereafter Hoti, *Sher Singh*).
3. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Lahore, 1885, II, p. 63. According to Suri, Ranjit Singh reduced and annexed Kasur after the birth of this prince. Latif, *History of the Punjab* (rpt.), New Delhi, 1964, p. 367.

Sher Singh being a reputed son of the Maharaja.⁴ Hoti opines that the Maharaja personally arranged for the education of the prince who was endowed with sharp brains and a handsome countenance. Sher Singh acquired knowledge of Gurmukhi, Persian as well as French and English at an early age.⁵ The prince could ride a horse and handle fire arms dexterously at an early age, and that it is why he was granted a bigger *jagir*. Hoti does not give any account of Sher Singh's youth and his stay at Batala with his grand-mother Rani Sada Kaur. He straight away starts off with his military career under the surveillance of Ranjit Singh. Sher Singh for the first time was ordered to lead an expedition to Hazro to bring the tribes residing there under control. Sher Singh's success⁶ in this endeavour was rewarded⁷ handsomely. According to Hoti the strategies and tactics adopted by Sher Singh enabled the Lahore army to win the day against a big horde of *ghazis*.⁸ On the basis of Diary of Sohan Lal Suri we come to know that Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself was actively participating in the campaigns that were headed towards North West Frontier at that time.⁹

Hoti is of the opinion that Sher Singh was sent on 5 December, 1829 to Peshawar to bring coveted horse 'Laili' from Yar Mohammed Khan. He writes that the Maharaja actually wanted to buy that horse at any cost. M'Gregor, Kanhaiya Lal and others feel that no doubt Ranjit Singh wanted to possess 'Laili' but in doing so he was not averse to using unfair means. We find that in 1823 the demand for one particular Persian horse was being made to Barakzai Sardars of Peshawar but they kept Lahore Kingdom's officials and generals at bay where handing over of this particular horse was concerned. Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Budh Singh Sandhawalia, Kanwars Sher Singh and Kharak Singh, Allard and Ventura were appointed at different times to get possession of this horse, but at last Ventura could get this horse from Sultan Muhammed by putting him under house arrest at Peshawar.¹⁰

According to Hoti, this time Syed Bareilvi had again started preaching *jehad* in the frontier area. The Maharaja wanted to solve both these problems, resultantly Kanwar Sher Singh was sent with a force to Peshawar where he was welcomed by Yar Muhammed Khan Barakzai. Afghan Chief told the Kanwar that 'Laili' had died

4. Latif, *op.cit.*, p. 370. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 63-64; Also see Ganda Singh, "Sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," *The Panjab Past and Present*, October 1980, pp. 55-65; Smyth, *The Reigning Family of Lahore* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, pp. 34-36; Steinbach, *The Punjab* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, p. 27; Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, p. 50; Diwan Amarnath, *Zafarnamah-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.), Sita Ram Kohli, Lahore, 1928, p. 40.
5. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, p. 18.
6. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 165; Hoti, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-6; Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 216, 237.
7. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, p. 337; Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
8. Hoti, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
9. See, generally, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Daftar II.
10. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 393-94; Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 1981, pp. 153-55; Prinsep, *op.cit.*, p. 118; Latif, *op.cit.*, p. 438; Thornton, *History of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970, Vol. II, pp. 88-89.

but latter came to know that he was lied to.¹¹ He found that 'Laili' was actually sent to the stables of Arbab Muhammed Khan at Takkal. Hoti is of the opinion that instead of getting angry with Yar Muhammed, the astute Kanwar, started negotiations with Barakzai Chief telling him that he was given orders to buy the horse of the latter at any cost. As Yar Mohammed was so impressed with the conduct of the prince that he resolved to sell the horse. Sixty thousand rupees and *jagir* worth 25,000/- rupees were given in payment for 'Laili' who was sent to Prince's stable where it did not stay for the surroundings were strange to the sensitive horse.¹² Sher Singh decided to send the horse to its old abode with a request that the horse should remain there till he started his journey back to Lahore. According to Hoti, Diwan Dhanpat Rai, *mukhtar* of Kharak Singh, did not relish the fact that Kanwar Sher Singh was successful in his endeavours of procuring 'Laili' whereas Kharak Singh, who was sent to earlier for the same could not do so. The Diwan played foul by attacking, looting and burning the quarters of Yar Muhammed Khan.¹³ Latif here whose work Hoti is drawing his raw material from, does not allude to this action done out of jealousy or any malice.¹⁴ Yar Muhammed taking this as a doing of Sher Singh fled to Yusufzai area along with his valuables and 'Laili.' When Sher Singh was informed of Diwan's misdeed he punished him accordingly. Hoti says that the *ghazis* and followers of Syed Ahmed thought that the fugitive Yar Muhammed, was sent to finish them and they attacked him, looted his camp and managed to take 'Laili' away. 'Laili' did not stay in their stables and again came back to Yar Muhammed Khan on its own. After the death of Yar Muhammed, Sultan Muhammed asked for pardon and handed 'Laili' back to Sher Singh, who brought it to Lahore. The Maharaja bestowed another *jagir* on his second son for his success in the mission. Hoti here gives opinion of Baron Hugel¹⁵ on 'Laili' and points it's mistake to call 'Laili' a mare as it was infact a horse and he says so on authority of Hugel and Diwan Amar Nath.¹⁶

The account given by Latif tells that Sher Singh and Ventura were sent to secure the horse only after an agreement was reached about the famous horse between agents of the Maharaja and Barakzai Sardars.¹⁷ Sohan Lal Suri and Rai Kanhaiya Lal opined that Sher Singh and Ventura, were sent last to get possession of the horse. They are unanimous in saying that it was Ventura who eventually got 'Laili' handed over to himself by Sultan Muhammed Khan Barakzai.¹⁸ Hoti despite devoting 19 pages to this episode did not give us a true picture of the same. The sources he is claiming to use, we find, are giving a different account but he is ignoring them, for his aim here is to give credit for possession of 'Laili' to Kanwar

11. *Ibid.*; Waheeduddin, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 438, Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p.298.

12. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, pp. 32-33.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34; Cf. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

14. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

15. Hoti, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39; Cf. Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab*, pp. 333-34.

16. Amarnath, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

17. Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 438, 441.

18. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 393-94; Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 118; M' Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs* (rpt.), Allahabad, 1979, Vol. I, 197.

Sher Singh, who is the hero of his biography.

Hoti writes that Kanwar Sher Singh was sent as the head of the Lahore army to Khairabad to subdue the Afghan *ghazis* who at the instigation of Azim Khan of Kabul had begun to assemble in large numbers to route the Lahore army from North West Frontier forever, but the brave prince did not allow them any opportunity to do so and gave them an overwhelming defeat.¹⁹ As far as it can be determined we find that it was Sher Singh who was actually sent to reinforce the existing *thanas* in the area to intimidate the troublesome Afghan tribes.²⁰

While dealing with the insurgency instigated by Syed Ahmed Bareilvi Hoti writes that in June 1830 A.D., Sher Singh was sent at the command of 12 thousand troops to quell the insurgent followers of the Syed who after two years inactivity were again getting ready for *jehad*.²¹ According to the account given by Sohan Lal Suri, Sher Singh was in North West Frontier with his force when this order was sent to him acting on his report of clandestine activities of the Syed.²²

Hoti opines that on reaching his destination the prince realised that it was counter propaganda which would win back the simple tribesmen rather than stern military action. For that purpose he requested the Maharaja to send Fakir Aziz-ud-Din for the purpose.²³ The Fakir along with Sardar Wazir Singh Khusaropuria went to Syed Ahmed's camp as Sher Singh's envoy to offer all sorts of help if the latter refrained from his nefarious activities. The letter that the Fakir was carrying from Sher Singh to Syed Ahmed and his erudite discourse impressed Syed Ahmed Bareilvi so much that he decided to send his men to Sher Singh's camp.²⁴ Maluana Khairdin Sher Kotvi and Haji Bahadur Shah Dehalvi along with eight *ghazis* reached Sher Singh's camp, but once the discussion started Sher Singh understood that Syed Ahmed had done that to gain more time for gathering his scattered *ghazis* for the impending battle. Syed's envoys were sent back and preparations were started for the attack on *ghazis*.

Although we find Sohan Lal Suri mentioning that Fakir Aziz-ud-Din was sent to Attock for the settlement of Fort there yet no specific mention of his contacting the Khalifa on behalf of Sher Singh is made.²⁵ On the base of the account of the royal diarist we get an impression which is factual in that the Khalifa was never trusted by the Sikhs nor the Khalifa was kindly or amicably inclined towards the Sikhs.²⁶

According to Hoti Syed suffered severely at the hands of Lahore troops. The Sikhs lost 120 troops, 187 were injured and 73 horses were lost. Despite this defeat, Hoti opines that, Syed Ahmed still had a strong hold on Yusafzais and other Afghan tribes residing in the area. Sher Singh resolved to begin counter-propaganda and engaged some locals for the job. Hoti gives a list of 15 points that were enumerated

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45.

20. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 383 and Daftar III, Part I, p. 11.

21. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, p. 46.

22. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, III, part-I, p. 16.

23. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, pp. 47-48.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-52.

25. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, III, Part-I, p. 16.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-33.

as being same in Sikhism and Islam, for weaning these tribesmen away from the Syed. According to Hoti some promises were also made. The Afghan tribesmen were also told about the Wahabis and their ideals which were quite opposed to mainstream Islam. Pathans were as it is, irate due to certain misdeeds of the Syed and decided to finish him at Zeida but the chief of the area saved him and helped him in fleeing to Thakote. It was at Balakot that Sher Singh's force defeated Syed's *ghazis*.²⁷ and Sher Singh himself killed Syed Ahmed Bareilvi. Hoti quotes *Swan-i-Ahmed Bareilvi*,²⁸ *Twarikh Subah Sarhadi*,²⁹ *Hayat Afghani*,³⁰ etc., for this episode. Actually Yusafzais were greatly angered with Syed for forcibly marrying some of their daughters to his followers. These tribals were very particular about marrying into tribe. This particular act along with the Khalifa asking for 10th part of their income for his cause and many other innovative doctrines made him unpopular with these tribals.³¹ Syed Ahmed was compelled by these Usafzais to leave their territory with bag and baggage and his movement had lost its popularity and following. Hoti gives an account of how Syed's movement ended and he is of the opinion that they were getting encouragement and financial help from the British whom he holds responsible for encouraging Syed Ahmed in his endeavours. Hoti criticises Latif for writing that Sher Singh sent severed heads of Syed Ahmed and his deputies to Lahore.³² Even Kanhaiya Lal is giving an account of severed heads of Khalifa and his deputies being sent to Lahore.³³ Hoti refutes this on the authority of Muhammed Jaffar's *Swan-i-Ahmed Bareilvi* and Syed Hasan Ali Naqvi's *Surat Syed Ahmed Shah Bareilvi*. According to Baba Prem Singh it was Sher Singh who arranged for their burial. The Maharaja rewarded the prince handsomely for his achievement.³⁴ As this work of Hoti was published in 1951 for the first time we find that he is criticising the British. Any of his pre-independence books do not carry any derogatory remarks about the British as one of Singh Sabha ideals called for abstinence from any kind of criticism of the British who were taken as patrons of the movement.

For his being an inquisitive³⁵ and an open-hearted person Baba Prem Singh Hoti gives examples of Sher Singh not laying any claim to throne despite being

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

28. By Muhammed Jaffar.

29. Maulana Mir Ahmed and another one by Maulvi Miran Baksh.

30. By Mohammed Hayat Khan.

31. Thornton, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-91; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, p. 273; Kanhaiya Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 308.

32. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, p. 89; Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, pp. 193-95. There is no mention of such occurrence in *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*. Rather we have clear information from Wasakha Singh's letter to the Maharaja informing him about the performance of last rites of the slain Khalifa by the Lahore army. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, III, part-I, p. 35.

33. Kanhaiya Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 309.

34. Hoti, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-91; Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, III, Part-I, p. 46.

35. Hoti, *op.cit.*, pp. 210-13; According to Honigberger, Sher Singh was polite amiable and had an intense desire for knowledge. He devoted attention to European skill, industry and learning. Unmindful of his position he would enter into free conversation with Europeans in order to enquire about scientific inventions made in their countries, *Thirty Five Years in the East* (rpt.), Patiala, 1970, p. 169.

better trained and more capable than his elder brother Kharak Singh. Despite the fact that many Sardars wanted him to be declared heir-apparent, Sher Singh decided to serve his elder brother in all possible ways. If we go through the contemporary correspondence of the British, we find that Sher Singh certainly was trying to put his claims to the throne after Ranjit Singh died.³⁶ So much so that he tried to seek British support in pursuance of his designs.³⁷

There was certainly no love lost between the half brothers. There were many a time when they quarrelled over many petty matters trying to discredit each other in the eyes of the Maharaja.

After coming to power in Hoti's opinion, Sher Singh brought the governmental work and procedures back to what they were at Ranjit Singh's time after a chaotic rule by Regency Council of Rani Chand Kaur. He writes that the governors of all the provinces were called to put their accounts right and pay the arrears of the due tribute. He ascertained that there was no theft or dacoity committed in his kingdom, and threatened erring officers and workers of dismissal to make them work honestly and efficiently. By quoting Muhammed Naqi Khan's *Sher Singh Namah*, Hoti establishes the fact that the general public was very happy and contented in his reign. Peace reigned supreme.³⁸ For some time there was a lull created in the times of his reign but his rule could barely be called peaceful with the amount of intrigues and counter intrigues going on and mutinies breaking out in Kashmir, Kullu, Multan, Peshawar, etc.³⁹

According to Hoti, Sher Singh led a simple life and his personal expenditure was very little. Giving an example of Sher Singh attending his father's Court without any expensive trappings and on being questioned about the reason for this simplicity, his answer was that he needed only his sword as an ornament to adorn him. Ranjit Singh appreciated him for this simplicity. Hoti quotes Osborne for the above mentioned statement.⁴⁰ This can be interpreted as the Kanwars tactics to get some more material gains from his father, the monarch for the time when this happened Sher Singh was being sent, as one of the party, to the camp of Governor-General and Ranjit Singh always prided himself in showing the opulent splendour of his court and courtiers to the foreigners.

While recounting Maharaja Sher Singh's mistakes Hoti has mentioned them

36. Wade to Maddock, June 1839, 147-II/115, P. G. R.; *Ibid.*, July 2, 1839, 147-II/116, P. G. R.; Charles Gough and Arthur Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, London, 1897, p. 50.

37. Torrens to Clerk, July 12, 1839, 123-II/67, P. G. R.; Cf. *Punjab Akhbarat*, 1839-41, Nos. 305-06; N. A. I.; Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, III, Part-IV, p. 11.

38. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, pp. 214-18.

39. For details see, Barkat Rai Chopra, *The Kingdom of the Punjab*, Hoshiarpur, 1969, pp. 143-183; Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, IV, Part-III; B. J. Hasrat, *op.cit.*, pp. 222-23.

40. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, pp. 219-20; Osborne gives a different version, "It appears that Runjeet, anxious that the deputation sent to meet the mission from Governor General should be credit to his court by splendour of their dress and appearance, ordered them all to attend him in the morning previous to their setting off to meet us...he addressed Sher Singh, and asked the reason *why he replied* his usual magnificent ornaments; who replied, touching the hilt of his sword, "I am a soldier and this is the only jewel I value," "Ranjit Singh angrily insisted upon knowing what had become of them, and at last elicited the truth from Sher Singh presented to him as a nuzzur... by Sher Singh," *op.cit.*, p. 66.

number wise. First two mistakes are seen from the religious point of view. Striking coin in his name and tying of beard have been criticised by Hoti in the light of Khalsa morality and *rahit*. He felt that as none of his ancestors had done that, he attracted the ire of 'Khalsa' and general public by doing so. This made him unpopular. His third mistake was to allow Dhian Singh to punish a man who had helped him heart and soul in his fight for the throne. Sardar Jwala Singh Mukeria, who was feared to have become very powerful due to his close proximity to the Maharaja by Dhian Singh, was put in prison by the latter and the Maharaja under his influence did nothing for the above mentioned aide of his. This turned other Sardars to become apprehensive of coming closer to the ruler. Resultantly they did not work for the sovereign with total devotion and loyalty. Hoti writes that his last mistake which cost him dearly was pardoning of Sandhanwalia Sardars at the instance of the British.⁴¹

Sher Singh surely did make a mistake of installing the Sandhanwalia Sardars to their previous status and allow them liberty enough to begin forming intrigues again but certainly not under the influence of the British. He was also averse to, like his predecessor, the power of authority that the Dogras enjoyed. As to counter them Sandhanwalia Sardars were called back.

In a two paged conclusion Hoti after enumerating Sher Singh's accomplishments and mistakes, argues that the Sardars and Chiefs at the Lahore Court of that time could not be acquitted of the responsibility of destroying the Kingdom established by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. According to him if Baba Bikram Singh Bedi, Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala and Bhai Ram Singh had stayed with the new Maharaja and guided him according to Khalsa tradition and not let the Dogras influence him, the Picture would have been much different from what it turned out to be.

41. Hoti, *Sher Singh*, pp. 223-27.

FAMILY ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH-EAST PUNJAB UNDER COLONIAL RULE

DR DIPAK CHATTARAJ*

By family is meant all persons of one household who have a common kitchen. Thus a household consisting of a grandfather or mother, married sons, daughters-in-law and grandsons and daughters would be reckoned as a joint family if they have a common hearth. Larger joint family is consisted of grand parents, unmarried or widowed uncles and aunts, married children, their spouses, unmarried children and other more distant kins. Both of these types of families had experienced some significant transformations during British period and nuclear family, made up of parents and their unmarried children, became an increasing phenomenon. Here in the ensuing pages an attempt is made to study the factors contributed to the process of change in the joint family system and we also propose to analyse that, how the nucleative and individualistic spirits were growing among the agrarian population and who were mostly affected by this development and why.

According to the census authority of 1921, in rural tracts of the south-eastern Punjab, "if the father's house is a small one, and it usually contains but one living room, the marriage of a son necessitates the building of another room; and though may continue to use the same courtyard and even the same hearth, it is generally found that within a short time the dissensions of the womenfolk, who have not been brought up from infancy amongst the family, make life inconvenient so that, sooner or later, a separate hearth is established or, more commonly, an entirely separate establishment is set up."¹

Considerations of space did not form the only reason for variety in the degree of separation common from village to village and from district to district; there were other reasons, such as, the growth of newer occupations which affected the joint family system to a certain extent. During the first quarter of the present century, job opportunities out-side agriculture increased in urban sectors. Following this trend many educated persons of the rural areas became Government employees, railway clerks, school teachers, newspaper editors, and employees of large urban business firms in Delhi and other important towns of the south-eastern Punjab.² Owing to the emergence of newer types of jobs, as industrial labour, truck driving, construction

*Madhyamgram, 24 Pargana (N), Calcutta (W. B.).

1. *Report on the Census of India, 1921*, Vol. XV, Part I, p. 93.

2. Education through high school and college was a main influence in a respondent's readiness for family change. The urban-rural differences were much more apparent in the case of educated villagers. Tearing apart from their families they wanted to settle down in urban areas with their spouse and children.

of buildings and modifications of existing trades, as carpentry, tailoring and handloom and powerloom weaving, moderate educated or even illiterate men also obtained jobs. Thus, co-parcenary groups (household) disintegrated in the face of newer economic opportunities for family members as individuals which came with the extension of economic frontier.³ In other words, when newer sources of occupations resulted in the increased circulation in money the economic basis for a joint family was weakened and the old family structure tended to disintegrate.⁴

Availability of marginal land (which could be brought under the plough) temporarily restrained the disruption of the family ties. During the 1860s the percentage of such lands in the different south-eastern Punjab districts were as follow: 19.4 in Delhi, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Karnal and Ambala, and 43.9 in Hissar and Sirsa.⁵ For this, the family remained more or less stationary for a longer period and there was no process of fission. But constant population growth⁶ created much pressure on the family, extended its size, made it too unwieldy to proceed smoothly and ultimately led to disruption. Again, partition of the family meant division of its land in small and fragmented holdings which made agriculture uneconomic, backward and undeveloped.⁷ Faced with contingencies, like the marriage of a daughter or a funeral feast for a death, the cultivators were compelled to borrow from the money-lenders and lost their land through sale or mortgage.⁸

In this process they had alienated from their ancestral holdings and emerged as agricultural labourers. Thus, each individual was seeking his own individual fortune and unwilling to take responsibility for anybody except his own primary kin and relatives (as parents, spouse and children), disintegration became the fate of his family.

A few distinct directions of change in family organization were apparent from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, the most dramatic transformations in the structure of the family occurred between 1890 and 1920 due to large-scale migration of the rural people to the Canal Colonies and elsewhere. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the number of emigrants from the south-eastern Punjab districts were 107, 019 (Delhi), 17, 813 (Rohtak), 14,078 (Gurgaon), 9, 326 (Karnal), and 4, 810 (Hissar).⁹ Consequently, all categories of

3. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XVII, Part I, 334.

4. The Members of family, whose income was in cash, were likely to separate more quickly because the disposition of money incomes led to arguments, and the cash was readily divisible.

5. *Report on the Census of the Punjab, 1868*, Statement No. IV, pp. 26-29.

6. The population of the south-eastern Punjab districts increased steadily; e.g. in Hissar, the population of the district was 672, 513 in 1881 while it rose to 775, 896 in 1891, 781, 589 in 1901, 804, 889 in 1911, and 816, 810 in 1921, or an increase of 13.2, 20.3, 19.1 and 31 per cent. respectively. From these figures it is easy to access the population growth of other districts.

7. *An Economic survey of Jamalpur Sheikhan—a village in the Hissar District*, The board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Publication No. 51, Lahore, 1937, 77, 84; *Report of the Punjab Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1930, p. 17.

8. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 27th March, 1886.

9. *Report on the Census of the India, 1921*, Vol. XV, 155-56; *Punjab District Gazetteer, Delhi-1912*, p. 53; *Assessment Report of the Rupar Tahsil of the Ambala District, 1917*, p. 47.

family had to experience new areas of conflict in organization, internal cohesion and fraternal solidarity. The *Patriarchal* and *Patrilocal* family, those generally formed with all primary and secondary kinsmen, faced the problem of disintegration and, in most cases, were split up. The decline of the lineally-collaterally extended family (composed of the grandfather, elder son and wife, younger son and his wife and the children of the two sons) and collaterally extended family (consisted of three or more brothers and their wives and children) was apparent as divisions among brothers became a normal development.¹⁰

The size of the family did vary to a certain extent with material conditions. Among the traders the economies of scale of a large household were reasons for upholding joint families. Besides, the high level of vitality and procreative power, with the result that their families shrank to a much smaller size than that of others in less affluent circumstances.¹¹ The village surveys show that, the *mahajans* and tradesmen had the lower proportion of joint families, although the continuation of joint ownership and joint endeavour in business was more a matter of convenience than a result of disintegration.

The nucleative and individualistic spirits were growing fast among the agricultural labourers and *kamins* who were wage earners and desperately poor. The proportion of nuclear family increased among them because the economic factors had simply driven their families to the process of fission. *An Economic Survey of Bhadas* argued that, the number of agricultural labourers and their families were 32 and 13—the average number of members per family was little less than 2.50, whereas it was 4.40 in the village.¹² The following figures show the number of families and persons of the *kamins* in Bhadas :

Table—I
Number of families and persons in Bhadas in 1935

Caste	Families	Persons	Average per Family
1	2	3	4
<i>Khatris</i> (wood workers)	2	8	4
<i>Lohars</i> (blacksmiths)	1	2	2
<i>Kumhars</i> (potters)	4	17	4.25
<i>Dhobis</i> (washermen)	3	10	3.33
<i>Chamars</i> (leather workers)	8	32	4
<i>Chuhars</i> (sweepers)	5	19	3.80
<i>Julahas</i> (weavers)	5	19	3.80

Source : *An Economic Survey of Bhadas—a village in the Gurgaon District, 1911.*

10. *An Economic Survey of Jamalpur Sheikhan—a village in the Hissar District.* The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, 21-22.

11. *Report on the Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 28.*

12. *An Economic Survey of Bhadas—a village in the Gurgaon District,* The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Publication No. 43, Lahore, 1936, pp. 12, 15.

In the cases of the peasant proprietors, the family tended to exist for a longer duration. Their economic condition brought unity, integrity and harmony in their families.¹³ They also expected a larger family because it, in many cases, emerged as an efficient unit of agrarian production organisation. This was especially true where continuous work was required, as where ripening crops must be watched against animal and human predators and when field labour must be quickly mobilised and intensively worked as at harvest.¹⁴ These were more evident in the case of a family belonged to any Hindu Jat. A larger number of male members in a Jat family were a source of strength. Hence at any one time the Jats tended to have a higher proportion of joint families. For instance, in Gijhi village the average number of members per family of the different tribes were : Jats, 6.86, *Beragis*, 6.0, *mahajans*, 5.75, *chamars*, 4.72, and *lohars*, 3.75.¹⁵

Generally, a Jat peasant tried to do his best to check any disruption in his family as he knew his prestige and social status, in a word, everything, entirely depended on the size of his holdings.¹⁶ If there was any division in a family, there was a corresponding diminution in the size of holdings which was likely to become a great threat to the social status and economic position of the family members. Thus, a larger family was an object of desire to a Jat. Moreover, a larger family meant larger holdings, more male members, more labourers and *kamins* (attached to the family) and more power and prestige. The head of the (larger) family could demand more dowry during the matrimonial settlements of his sons.¹⁷ In this process he was capable of increasing his money, ornaments and landed property which would likely to give him a greater domination in his village.

It seems that the agricultural castes had a significantly high incidence of joint family which continued to exist as an integral part of their social life. By the end of our period and even the later year there was still the predomination of the joint family in the south-eastern part of the Punjab. *An Economic Survey of Jamalpur Sheikhan* reveals that, in 1934 the agricultural population was divided into 520 families, an average of 4.83 persons to a family. It was 4.82 in 1926 and 4.54 in 1921.¹⁸

13. *Report on the Census of India*, 1911, Vol. XIV, p. 29.

14. Mandelbaum, D.G., *Social Organization and Planned Culture change in India*, Srinivas, M.N. and Others, (eds.), *India's Village*, Delhi, 1960, p. 76.

15. *An Economic Survey of Gijhi—a village in the Rohtak District*, The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Publication No. 17, Lahore, 1932, pp. 6-7.

16. *Ibid.*, 166.

17. The size of the holdings of the Jats had considerable implications in the prevailing marriage system of the caste. The sons of the bigger landowner could bring dowry while the sons of a smaller one could none. Even, in certain cases, the chances of marrying his sons were rendered hopeless. He readily paid cash money to the parents of a bride. This encouraged selling of daughters, resulting in wide age gap between husband and wife. A custom of widow remarriage, called *karewa*, was prevalent among them. In case of the husband's death, a widow could marry either her *dewar*, (the younger brother of her husband) or her *jeth* (the elder brother of her husband). The practice protected the honour and property of a joint family. *Punjab District Gazetteer, Rohtak-1910*, 90-91; *Punjab District Gazetteer, Karnal-1918*, pp. 51-53.

18. *An Economic Survey of Jamalpur Sheikhan—a village in the Hissar District*, The Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, p. 21.

The Census Report of 1931 suggests that the size of the family of the zamindars had not altered much and tracts with large families in 1921 were even in 1931 characterized by the same feature :

TABLE—II
Average of persons to a family in certain South-eastern Punjab districts in 1921 and 1931.

<i>District</i>	<i>Average per Family in 1921</i>	<i>Average per Family in 1931</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Rohtak	4.88	5.8
Hissar	4.82	5.8
Ambala	4.7	4.34

Source : *Report on the Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVII, 82.*

What emerges from the foregoing account is that a certain number of factors, such as growth of newer occupations, rise in population, land-alienation, migration, development of individualism, the spread of colonial education etc. had a far-reaching effect on the traditional pattern of family organization. In owing to the combined effects of the said factors the process of fission in the joint family system was going on. But this does not mean that the joint family system had ceased to exist during colonial administration. It was still in force. The peasant-proprietors expected a larger family as it was an efficient production unit. Thus, it was an object of desire of the peasant-proprietors, especially of the Hindu Jats. The joint family, in the eyes of a Jat, meant larger holdings, more male members, more labourers and *kamins*, more power and prestige, and more dowry during the matrimonial settlements of the male members of the family. Actually, the longer or shorter duration of a joint family was greatly depended on the material condition of the household. As the land-owning castes like the jats were better off than the *kamins* and agricultural labourers, the joint family tended to exist for a longer period in their case. In other words, the well-off condition of the jats had brought unity, integrity and harmony in their family organization. On the other hand, the hard economic factors had simply driven the families of the *kamins* and agricultural labourers to the process of disintegration. For this the nucleative and individualistic spirits were growing fast among them and the proportion of nuclear family increased considerably.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE COLONIAL STATE : PERCEPTION AND REALITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH PUNJAB

NAVTEJ SINGH*

The western education system introduced by the British for their own requirements posed a serious problem in the form of large scale unemployment both in the rural and urban areas of the Punjab during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Apart from the socio-economic tensions the repercussions of this emerging scenario were to affect the political equilibrium of the province. In order to gauge the extent of the problem the Colonial State constituted a committee which submitted its report in 1927.¹ It focused on the range of unemployment both among the uneducated and educated persons, the causes of unemployment and the possible remedies for its mitigation.² The paper attempts to evaluate the Colonial perception of the reality by concentrating on the racial bias on the one hand and the attitude of evading the basic issues by the State on the other.

The committee found that there was no unemployment worthy of mention among the uneducated classes but in some districts, notably Shahpur, there were reports of unemployment among weavers. But this, the committee considered, rather unemployment as weavers than absolute unemployment; for members of the weaving class find alternative employment in agriculture. The committee did not explore then why did agriculture fail at this time to absorb them? It admits indirectly that competition with foreign manufactures had hit the handloom weavers in Punjab. The next uneducated category existed of ex-soldiers who were not disposed to return to agriculture after leaving the colours. It also recognised that the question of unemployment among retired soldiers was part of the general question of pressure on the land in certain districts. There was considerable distress among the cotton-ginning factory hands during off-seasons. In some districts the moneylending and petty shop-keeping classes had also been facing unemployment due to changed modern conditions. Number of persons formerly employed in the railway workshops in Lahore now were out of job.³

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1. Being the Report of the Committee appointed by the Governor-in-Council by Punjab Government, Home Department, Resolution No. 4920, Dated 16 February 1927.
2. The Committee had eight members; two of them Nanak Chand and Ujjal Singh gave their notes of dissent.
3. *Ibid.*, para 4, pp. 4-5.

It was observed that unemployment among "educated classes" existed on a very considerable scale but the social structure of the province saved the young men who had failed to obtain salaried posts in government or private service or any other employment outside the ancestral occupations.⁴ It was noticed that the annual addition to the "educated classes" had more than doubled during the years from 1922 to 1927, and though there had in the same period been a considerable expansion of some departments of government, the increase in the number of posts thus made available for the "educated classes" could not have been commensurate with the increase in the number of competitors for such posts, and there had certainly not been any such expansion of the commerce and industry of the province as could absorb the surplus.⁵

Profession-wise, it was observed that the profession of law was over-crowded and that many of those who follow it were unable to make a decent living. It was readily abandoned if any sort of appointment could be obtained. In 1917 the number of advocates and pleaders shown in the civil list was 1,698 and for 1928 it numbered 3,613, yet the total number of civil and criminal cases of all sorts including appeals and revisions was actually slightly less in 1926 (479, 516) than in 1916 (479, 637). As regards medical graduates of the 256 turned out in the period 1922-26 only 32 had obtained employment. Independent medical practice did not afford a decent living because urban areas were crowded by medical practitioners, while rural areas were served by the public dispensaries. But the committee felt that rural areas had more scope for them if the doctors adopted those conditions. Graduates from agricultural engineering and veterinary were fully absorbed. There was no unemployment in teaching profession but it was likely to provide less employment for intermediates and matriculates in future.⁶

The committee attributed the existing situation to Lord Macaulay's system of education which "was meant to create a class of translators to serve purely as interpreters and no more, with the addition that anything real was gone and the rest was all imitation and chaff where there was no place for anything conducive to make a human-being of an Indian."⁷ The committee, in fact, ignored the basic intentions of Macaulay where the assumption for introducing the Western education system was the creation of a class of 'Indians in body but British in soul' with the expectation of permanent 'loyalty' to the Raj. But it emphasised that the present system of education in its very inception was moulded with the special objects of preparing boys for external examinations and of training them for clerical vocations. Here the committee evaded the basic thrust and asserted that in any case whatever the intentions of those responsible for the beginnings of our present system of education might have been, it was clear that "education" very soon came to be regarded simply as a means of obtaining a salaried appointments under government. The committee projected a biased view and proclaimed: "In India in vast majority of cases education after the matriculation stage was not received for the sake of

4. *Ibid.*, para 5, p.6.

5. *Ibid.*, para 6, pp. 6-7.

6. *Ibid.*, paras 7-11, pp. 8-10.

7. *Ibid.*, para 13, p.11.

culture and enlightenment, but merely because it was somehow supposed to be the magic passport to success in the way of obtaining government service." From 'loyalty' to 'human beings' to 'culture and enlightenment' the racial bias is evident. Further, it went on, "In fact almost everybody went in for education merely for government service. We have not even uptill the present time reached the stage when education was received for the sake of education alone." The 'necessity of education for education sake' but it went on that "children are educated to seek employment in offices." "For many years the one ambition of every Indian parent, of whatever position, caste or creed, has been to get his sons into government services. The easiest way to do this has been to get the boy through the entrance examination and obtain a post for him in the clerical or other establishment, of one of the many departments for which this is the minimum qualifications." "The education given merely turns out clerks." "There seems to be a general idea that anyone who has passed entrance has a claim on the government that they should provide a job for him and has a cause of grievance if they do not." "The present education turns out no better stuff than indifferent office bobus."⁸

In fact the government was shirking its responsibility of giving employment in the garb of dubbing that the British education system in India had failed to make Indians 'human being.' If the people in Britain did not obtain education for the same purpose and why the British did not think even at this stage to introduce the type of education which would make Indians spiritually enlightened and culture? Moreover, if the entire class of educated Indians was merely unculture? And what should have been the definition of human being? Also, after becoming human beings what the educated class should have resorted to? The committee discussed unemployment in different professions but when coming to the causes its outburst was only on becoming the people clerks.

It was remarked further by the committee that "Not only did the present system of education produce nothing but clerks, but it rendered the unfortunate recipients of education unfit to follow even their ancestral occupations, let alone any other form of occupation." As more time passes in the school the boy adopts habits which makes him more and more averse to his parents's occupation, with the result that after finishing his education he does not feel happy if he is obliged to live and work in the family profession. I have frequently met matriculated sons of zamindars who were unable to milk a cow or guide a plough and were horrified at the idea of touching a spade. The sons of competent artisans instead of sticking to their trade get a smattering of education and become fifth-rate clerks. The present education is quite unsuitable for agriculturists and instead of making them follow their own profession, it drives them from it altogether. It is of course true (especially of agriculture) that higher education keeps a boy so much away from his hereditary occupation that he is frequently less fitted for it than an uneducated man."⁹ But these observations were refuted by two members of the same committee Nanak Chand and Ujjal Singh in their notes of dissent where they advocated that the educated agricultural boys show tendency to work in their ancestral occupations

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

9. *Ibid.*, para 14, pp. 13-14.

provided they should be granted lands in the canal colony areas of Punjab.¹⁰

The committee felt that among certain classes of the population the idea of undertaking any sort of manual labour, even labour requiring skill, was regarded with abhorrence. "This aversion does not arise ordinarily from physical incapacity but from tradition, up-bringing and the home influence, all of which are, generally speaking unfavourable to any form of manual work." "There is undoubtedly a tendency to look upon manual labour or any form of occupation involving skill with hands as of an inferior status, and the sons of subordinates and *mistris* who for generations past have been able and efficient workers are insisting upon clerical and semi-clerical employment rather than the actual carrying out of works themselves." "Educated Indians look upon labour as undignified and will not do any work other than clerical work." "With the Hindus the low caste man has always been the manual labour. The higher castes form the majority of the educated and the inherited aversion from manual labour persists." But the committee also recognised that conditions in this respect were changing and this aversion was being overcome by sheer necessity.¹¹

It remarked that government service was popular on account of its security and the *izzat* attaching to it, but perhaps among the other reasons was that there were no other avenues of employment. It recognised correctly but at the same time felt that in government service a man had an easy life with short hours and plenty of holidays, regular promotion and no particular need for efficiency. This again was not true as every government job required specific qualifications. Also, the committee observed, "at present an average *zaminder* thinks that he can save himself from everyday insults heaped upon him by government officials by taking to some government service and leaving his ancestral profession." "The very marked desire among agriculturists (especially Rajput Hindus) to end what they regard as the urban domination in the administration machine." "The desire for government service as a desire to obtain a share of the power hitherto monopolized by the urban classes."

The committee recognised that this was also evident by the demand made by agriculturists for the expansion of educational facilities in rural areas but this was partly to the pressure of the population on the land and the desire of the agricultural classes to find other means of livelihood. Both these desires were shared by the poorer urban classes who were previously content with their traditional occupations. It is, however, unfortunate that before these new classes were placed in a position to compete, the inevitable result was not foreseen and arrangements were not made either to restrict the number of possible competitors from all classes, new and old, or to ensure that unsuccessful competitors should be fit for other occupations or atleast not rendered unfit for their ancestral occupations, the committee pronounced.¹²

Suggesting remedies for mitigation of unemployment the committee

10. *Ibid.*, para 1, p.33 and para 3, p. 37.

11. *Ibid.*, para 15, pp. 14-16.

12. *Ibid.*, paras 16-17, pp. 16-18.

recommended that facilities for higher education should be provided only for the markedly able who, if poor, should be subsidized by the state, or for those who could pay its full cost. By doing so the committee expected that the number of "educated class" would be lowered. It felt that obtaining of degrees in India was comparatively much easier and cheaper and that the standard was ridiculously low. The only remedy would seem to be drawing a clear dividing line between the elementary and higher education and only permitting the really hopeful boys to proceed to the latter. It advocated that education should be made difficult. It was also felt, "that what other country in the world gives a high school and college education, mainly at the public expense, to thousands of boys annually of third rate ability, sons of petty farmers and shopkeepers or even of humbler folk, who contribute in the way of fees only an infinite portion of the cost ? Can rich western countries afford this ? If not, how can India ?"¹³ In fact, the Colonial bias and confusion are too evident. On the one hand they talk about the creation of 'a cultured human', on the other, they stressed on the diversified limited education, which, was already there. Thirdly, if the qualified professionals were all without merit ?

This tendency of evading the basic issues is further evident in their suggestions when it recommended that if the higher education was made more difficult to obtain the qualifications for government appointments should be lowered. It means, instead of simple education, the candidates with specific experience should be selected. Education must be a real education related to life. It would help to proceed either to higher literacy or professional education or to industrial or commercial training or enabling them to take up their ancestral occupation. Children should be given practical training.¹⁴ Increased facilities for technical and industrial education must be provided. Provision should be made for training of architects and dispensing chemists. Private practitioners in rural areas should be subsidized. Provision should be made for the training of law graduates in the art of conveyancing. The co-operative department should be extended so as to be able to foster co-operative production and distribution. Small holdings should be provided for educated young men for certain purposes. Village "uplift" work should be encouraged and also rural sports and pastimes. There should be district agricultural schools corresponding to industrial schools.¹⁵

However, one member of the committee Nanak Chand in his dissent noted that the remedies suggested were wholly inadequate to meet the existing unemployment. He pleaded that there was a great desire among the educated agricultural class to adopt agriculture as their profession and that high prices which the Crown lands fetch in the open market stand in the way of poverty-stricken educated class, which could not find means to acquire land on account of keen competition. He also stressed the need to remove restriction on purchase of colony lands and also grant lands to the youth. He further advocated the need for dairy

13. *Ibid.*, para 19, pp. 19-21.

14. *Ibid.*, paras 20-21, pp. 21-24.

15. *Ibid.*, paras 22-27, pp. 24-29.

farming, opening up of new industries especially of matches and clocks, umbrellas, bicycles, toys, rubber goods and the like for which India depended solely on import from other countries. He also desired for the opening of army, navy and air force for the educated Indians.¹⁶

Another member Ujjal Singh felt that of late the agricultural classes who were content to remain on their farms have awakened to the necessity of getting their share of government services. This fact has still further swollen the number of those middle class young men who have no other means of livelihood but who could not get into service. The chances of employment would increase if more services were thrown open to Indians and if the pace of Indianization of higher services, the civil service, the army, navy, air force were accelerated. He also rejected committee's ideas of making higher education more difficult. He stressed that in a poor country and a country backward in education such as the Punjab, the facilities for education should not be restricted. It was not advisable to make examinations more stiff in order to weed out the less capable students. In fact the examinations now-a-days were mainly responsible for lowering the physique of the students. Moreover, the percentage of passes in matriculation which was 72.3 in 1922 fell to 53.02 in 1927. So it was incorrect to say that the standard of examinations were deteriorating. It would be a fatal policy to make examinations more stiff in order to keep out students from continuing further studies. He stressed that in any scheme of colonization educated young men be encouraged. Industry and commerce in the state should be revived. He felt that industrial development alone could hold out increasing scope of employment to the educated as well as the uneducated class.¹⁷ But the committee rejected views of both Nanak Chand and Ujjal Singh.

Thus the committee while recognising the real issues of crises attempted to evade them because of racialism and to save the interests of Colonialism. Its understanding and remedies both were contradictory and confused which reflected the hollowness of the seriousness of the British administrators that appeared to act against the ideology of 'paternalism'. Committee's deliberate failure to see the things in proper perspective provided the basis for the emergence of unrest among the educated classes who ultimately lead the masses in ushering the anti-imperial movements in the province on the one side and forced the unemployed Punjabis to migrate to outside Punjab and to abroad in search of new pastures. Both the tendencies thus development only consolidated anti-British feelings in the form of the national movement that ultimately put pressure on the British to quit the country. In short, failure of the British to handle the economic issues of Indians sowed the seed of 'opposition' instead of 'loyalty' to the Raj.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.

THE PROPRIETORS AND TENANTS IN THE UPPER BARI DOAB (1849-1947)

B. S. HIRA*

The *Jāgīrdārs* and *muāfīdārs* were entitled to receive the revenue assigned to them and they had little to do with the land itself; invariably almost; even when they were proprietors of some other land, they did not cultivate it. But it was not true in the case of the bulk of the proprietors. Most of them cultivated their own lands. Those of the proprietors whose holdings were small could either give their land to tenants or they could get additional land from other proprietors to work as their tenants. Thus, nearly the entire cultivation in the province was carried on by proprietors and tenants, and the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar were no exception.

I

Following the practice of the North-Western Province, the British administrators of the Punjab divided proprietary tenures into three classes: the *zamīndārī*, the *pattīdārī* and the *bhaiyachārā*. These are the categories of tenure in which the reports and gazetteers talk from the very beginning till the end of British rule in the Punjab. They became increasingly aware, however, of the inadequacy of this classification, as also of the changes taking place within this broad framework during the period of British rule. Though the inadequacy of classification itself defied exactitude in enumeration, the records of these tenures from time to time do provide an indication of the broad trends.

R. N. Cust defines *zamīndārī* tenure as 'Joint and Undivided area held by one or many' and he gives the total number of *zamīndārī* villages in the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Batala, Amritsar, Ajnala and Tarn Taran as 280. The number in the first three tahsils was 221 and in the last three only 59. The number in tahsil of Pathankot alone has more than double the number of *zamīndārī* villages in Amritsar District in which Tahsil Tarn Taran had only 12 *zamīndārī* villages, Tahsil Amritsar had 22 and Tahsil Ajnala had 25 such villages, while the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala, respectively, had 120, 69 and 36 *zamīndārī* villages. It is rather interesting to note that the number of *zamīndārī* villages decreased with the increasing distance of a tahsil from the hills, from 120 in Pathankot to only 12 in Tarn-Taran, with 65, 36, 25 and 22 in the tahsils in between.¹

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1. R.N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, Lahore, 1861, para 13 & Appendix XVI A.

The *pattīdārī* tenure is defined by Cust as 'co-parcenary', and it was divided further into 'perfect' and 'imperfect'. In the former, the area was divided and in the latter it was partly divided and partly undivided. However, the number of perfect *pattīdārī* villages in all the six tahsils was only 36, whereas the number of imperfect *pattīdārī* villages in these six tahsils was 1378. The difference between the *pattīdārī* and *bhaiyachārā* tenures, according to Cust, was that in the latter the extent of interest of the share-holder was represented by 'the area of actual possession, and not by fractional shares or the family tree.' The *bhaiyachārā* tenure too was either perfect or imperfect depending upon whether or not the entire area was divided. The number of perfect *bhaiyachārā* villages in the six tahsils was merely 2, whereas 911 villages belonged to the category of 'imperfect'.² These figures clearly demonstrate that the classification of proprietary tenures imported from outside was sought to be fitted on to the villages in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar, as in the rest of the province. With the exception of 318 villages, the bulk of which were *zamīndārī*, the classification was 'misfit' in Gurdaspur and Amritsar as in many other districts of the province.

In the early 1860s, E. A. Prinsep put forth a 'theory of tenures' in terms of a dynamic process consisting of five hypothetical stages which appeared to account for the existing tenures in the majority of the villages of the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. In the first stage, there is a founder of a village with a joint family who secures property by purchase, grant, appropriation or conquest : this is the pure landlord system. In the second stage, called communal or joint stock, the sons of the founder hold the property in common and maintain the joint interest because there is no need of resorting to division, the interest of each brother or shareholder being regulated by the customs or the laws of inheritance. The demand for land resulting in dissensions due to one son cultivating less and the other cultivating more than his share brought in the third stage of division regulated by ancestral shares. The fourth stage, that of division regulated by customary shares, would be the result of a long process and change. 'As generation succeeds generation, and the country is subject to change of rule, stress of seasons, and accidents occur, leading to hardship to individual co-partners; or, some die off, other leave the village; some get involved in difficulties, others mortgage their properties: it can be conceived that mutations would follow, which would increase the holdings of some, while others being unable or unwilling to succeed to lapsed shares, additional reason would appear for not disturbing possession.' In the process, ancestral shares would die out and customary shares would take their place. The last stage, regulated by possession, would come after the failure of succession due to one or another cause, or a set of causes, obliterating all resort to shares : a money settlement in former days, poverty of some proprietors inducing the *kārdār* to locate cultivators, proximity to a town or city resulting in frequent change in proprietorship, the decision of the proprietors themselves to treat possession as the measure of interest, entry of men belonging to different castes as owners, and the like. These five stages, thought Prinsep, covered nearly all the major forms of proprietary tenure known in

2. Loc cit.

his own days.³

However, the classification of proprietary tenures into *zamīndārī*, *pattīdārī* and *bhaiyachārā* was not dropped or modified when it came to tabulation. In the administration report of 1872-73, for example, all the 36,814 villages of the province are divided into these three categories with the exception of 572 villages held by lessees from government with right of ownership.⁴ In the first volume of the administration report for 1921-22, entitled, *The Land of the Five Rivers*, it is stated that when the British reached the Punjab they had already adopted a classification of tenures which was applied to the Punjab tenures 'even in cases where it was inapplicable.' The term *zamīndārī* was really intended to apply to those cases in which a village had a single landlord, but in the Punjab such landlords were rarely to be found. 'Still there were cases where, from one cause or another, a single person had become landlord.' When he was replaced by a numerous body of sons and grandsons holding the estate jointly, the *khālis zamīndārī* gave place to joint or *mushtarka zamīndārī*. In the same way *pattīdārī* was meant to indicate that the property was held more or less closely on accordance with the equal fractional shares of the law and custom of inheritance. But in the Punjab the term was more loosely used to include a severalty holding on any scheme of shares, where those shares were really part of what was once regarded as one. The term *bhaiyachārā* was originally used for a special variety of landlord village but it was now used for any form of a village in which possession was the measure of right, or where ancestral fractional shares were not respected in allotting shares. Such villages were much more numerous in the Punjab than in the United Provinces.⁵

Already before the end of the 19th century in the district of Amritsar it was noticed that there was a clear tendency towards increase in the number of *bhaiyachārā* villages. There was only 11 villages in the landlord category and these were mostly formed lately; there were 21 villages in the 'communal' or joint-stock category, but in most of them holdings were actually divided temporarily pending a permanent partition. The bulk of the villages were shown in the *pattīdārī* tenure, but *pattīdārī* was a rather 'negative description' only indicating that the village had not yet reached the stage in which each man's possession was the sole measure of right. There was a strong tendency towards 'making liability follow possession.' However, pure *bhaiyachārā* tenure was as rare as pure *pattīdārī* because in almost all such villages there was still some land recorded as held in common and the joint owners desired it to be recorded as divisible according to the now abandoned shares. "In the great bulk of the communities of the district the measure of right as between major sub-divisions (*tarafs*) has come to be possession. This is the case

3. E. A. Prinsep's report as a Settlement Commissioner, quoted, *Amritsar District Gazetteer* 1892-93, pp. 66-67.

4. Quoted, *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1892-93*, Lahore, 1894, p. 55.

The number of villages in the three categories of tenure, respectively, was 4,141 and 11,159 and 20,942.

5. *The Land of the Five Rivers* (Being Volume I of the *Punjab Administration Report, 1921-22*) Lahore, 1923. Paras 216-218.

too with most of the more important minor sub-divisions (or *pattis*), even though difference between the total area held by each is small.⁶ It is interesting to note that the later gazetteers of the district do not improve upon the position stated in the late 19th century. Even the last gazetteer which was supposed to describe the position around 1940 merely repeats what was printed in 1892-93. Nevertheless, the figures given in its table of tenures do indicate a significant change. Out of its 1,090 villages 616 are under *pattīdārī* 449 under *bhaiyachārā* and 25 under *zamīndārī* tenures.⁷ Compared with the figures in Cust's *Statistical Report*, there was a reduction in the number of *zamīndārī* villages from nearly 60 to 25. The number of *pattīdārī* villages decreased from 736 to 616 and the number of *bhaiyachārā* villages increased from 264 to 451.⁸ Furthermore, only five villages in the district made ancestral right the unit for distribution of revenue over their holdings, all the other owners making themselves responsible for the revenue of the area actually in their possession.⁹

In Gurdaspur District a similar tendency was noticed in the early 1890s. It was in many cases impossible to class a village satisfactorily 'under any one of the ordinarily recognised tenures' because the primary division of rights between the main sub-divisions of the village followed one form while the interior distribution among the proprietors of each of these sub-divisions followed another form. Occasionally, the revenue was distributed by an all-round rate on actual possession while the division of land was still regulated by ancestral or customary shares. The gradual progress from sole proprietorship to 'communal' tenure, and from that to a division of ancestral shares, then to customary shares and finally to individual proprietorship, where each man's holding was the sole measure of his right, was strongly marked in the district. The number of *bhaiyachārā* villages as recorded in the settlement reports increased from about 400 to over 900.¹⁰ Before the World War First, the number of *zamīndārī* villages in the district stood largely reduced from about 220 to about 70. The number of *bhaiyachārā* villages increased by nearly 100, but the number of *pattīdārī* villages also increased very considerably.¹¹

Nevertheless, the author of the gazetteer of the district of Gurdaspur asserted that most of the villages originally founded by single families had already passed to the final stage of *bhaiyachārā* or were passing to it through the intermediate stages of perfect and imperfect *pattīdārī*. The sub-division of villages into *tarafs*, *pattis* and holdings was the natural result of the multiplication of the descendants of the original family, and several causes led to the disappearance of ancestral and customary shares. The shares of the branches that died out were not usually divided by the surviving branches according to ancestral shares. The childless proprietors

6. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1892-93*, pp. 67-68.

7. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1947*, 190, pp. 189-94.

The largest increase in the number of *baihyachara* villages was in Tahsil Tarn Taran, and the largest number of *zamindari* villages was still in Tahsil Ajnala.

8. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVI A.

9. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, 1947*, p. 190.

10. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer, 1892*, quoted, *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer, 1914*, pp. 163-65.

11. *Ibid.*, 166; R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVI A.

gave their lands to some of their collaterals who managed to retain them afterwards. Vacant lands were seized by the powerful member to the exclusion of others. The absentees were not given their full share on their return, and the shares of those who did not return remained in the hands of those who possessed them for cultivation. Sales of land, though not very frequent, also affected ancestral or customary shares. The villages founded by officials and *jāgīrdārs* were of the *bhaiyachārā* type from the very beginning, and in some of them the original proprietors lost their rights to tenants.¹²

The small number of *zamīndārī* villages from the very beginning and their decreasing number with the passage of time strongly suggests that the number of big landholders was not large in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. This impression is re-inforced by the small number of chiefs and families of note' in the two districts most of whom were among the large land-holders. Their number in the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala was larger than in the tahsils of the district of Amritsar. The distribution of *zamīndārī* villages also followed this broad pattern. However, even in the tahsils of Gurdaspur District the number of big landholders was rather small. In Tahsil Pathankot the number of large land-holders who on the average held more than 200 acres was only 17; the number of those who held on the average more than 25 acres of land was less than 550.¹³ In Tahsil Gurdaspur only 20 proprietors held on the average more than 150 acres, and the number of those who held on the average about 15 acres was not more than 500.¹⁴ In Tahsil Batala only 3 proprietors held more than 300 acres on the average; the number of those who on the average held more than 140 acres was only 17.¹⁵ Even if there was a large degree of error in these figures, the general inference remains safe : the number of large land-holders in the Upper Bari Doab was rather small.

II

From the existence of a very large number of small land-holders in the Upper Bari Doab it may be expected that the bulk of them would cultivate their own lands as peasant proprietors. Including all categories of proprietors, there were about 6,675 owners with an average holding of 22 acres in the *pargana* of Pathankot. In Gurdaspur, the total number of owners was a little over 20,700 and each held 15 acres on the average. The average holding in the *pargana* of Batala was 17 and the total number of owners was about 17,450. In Amritsar, nearly 19,975 owners held 16 acres each on the average. The number of land-holders in Tarn Taran was over 21,575 with an average holding of 13 acres. The average holding in the *pargana* of Sowrian was 10 acres, while the total number of owners was about 15,725.¹⁶ The total number of cultivators was much larger than the number of proprietors : over 24,000 in Amritsar, over 26,000 in Tarn Taran, over 22,500 in Sowrian over 36,000 in Gurdaspur, over 33,000 in Batala, and over 15,500 in Pathankot. Among them, the number of proprietor cultivators was very considerable : over 15,500 in Amritsar

12. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer, 1914*, pp. 166-67.

13. *A. R. Tahsil Pathankot*; Lahore, 1891, Statement II.

14. *A. R. Tahsil Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1891, Statement III.

15. *A. R. Tahsil Batala*, Lahore, 1889, Statement III.

16. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Appendix Xi

over 19,500 in Tarn Taran, over 15,500 in Sowrian, over 20,500 in Gurdaspur, nearly 17,500 in Batala, and over 6,500 in Pathankot. Their importance in terms of the area they cultivated and the revenue they paid was even greater. Over 95,500 in a total of over 156,000, the proprietary cultivators tilled about 921,000 acres of land out of about 1,287,000 acres under cultivation of the total *jama'* of over 2,000,000 rupees, they paid more than 1,383,000 rupees.¹⁷

Data comparable in all respects are not available for the decades following but the available data are suggestive of the increasing number of peasant-proprietors and their decreasing importance. In Tahsil Pathankot, for instance, the area under cultivation increased from about 107,000 acres to about 128,000 acres, partly due to change in the boundaries and partly due to extension of agriculture, in about three decades. But whereas in the late 1850s the area cultivated by the proprietors was more than half, in the late 1880s it was about 45 per cent. The number of proprietary holdings was less than, 13,000 in a total of about 44,000.¹⁸ In Tahsil Gurdaspur, the area cultivated by proprietors themselves was reduced from over 65 per cent to about 56 per cent; the average holding was reduced from a little less than 8 acres to a little more than 3 acres.¹⁹ In Tahsil Batala, the area cultivated was reduced from over 61 per cent; to only a little more than 57 per cent.²⁰ At the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century only 47 per cent of the area under cultivation was cultivated by the owners in the district as a whole.²¹

For the tahsils of Amritsar, Ajnala and Tarn Taran, the assessment reports do not contain any statistics. But they do contain some significant statements. In four circles of Tahsil Amritsar, for instance, the size of an average proprietary holding ranged between 7 and 11 acres, but the average area cultivated by a proprietor ranged between 5 and 6.5 acres.²² The average proprietary holding in Tahsil Ajnala ranged between 6 and 8 acres in its four circles, while the holding per head ranged between 3.5 and 5 acres. These averages were lower than in the other tahsils around.²³ In Tahsil Tarn Taran, the average holding fell between 8 and 13 acres, and the holding per head ranged between 6 and 11 acres. These averages were apparently lower than the averages in the late 1850s.²⁴ Before the end of the 19th century, holdings were becoming 'very small throughout the district' and pressure on the land was 'much felt' the average holding in the tahsils of Amritsar and Tarn Taran was less than 7 acres and in Ajnala it was about 5 acres. But the averages were misleading, because of the 'painfully small' holdings in some villages which did not provide sufficient means of subsistence for the owners who had 'to rent other lands from their more fortunate brethren.'²⁵ In the early 20th century, the reduction in the size of proprietary holdings made the district appear more and more as a district of

17. *Ibid.*, Appendix XVIII.

18. A. R. *Tahsil Pathankot*, Lahore, 1891, Statement VI.

19. A. R. *Tahsil Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1891, Statement VI.

20. A. R. *Tahsil Batala*, Lahore, 1889, Statement 7 A.

21. S. R. *District Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1912, p. 4.

22. A. R. *Tahsil Amritsar*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 14-15.

23. A. R. *Tahsil Ajnala*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 14-15.

24. A. R. *Tahsil Tarn Taran*, Lahore 1891, pp. 17-18.

25. *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1892-93*, pp. 68-69.

small proprietors, and this reduction coupled with fragmentation made consolidation all the more imperative.

The relative position of proprietors within a village, and of a village within a group of villages held by the same clan, and of a clan in relation to other proprietary clans, did not remain static, but inspite of change and outmigration the land-owning tribes and clans showed a remarkable tenacity in holding on to their villages. This is borne out by a comparison of statements in the reports and gazetteers of tahsils and districts throughout the period of British rule. In Amritsar District as a whole the most numerous and the most powerful landed proprietors were jats. By religious affiliation they were Sikh, Handali, Sultani and Muslim, and the most conspicuous among them all were the followers of Guru Gobind Singh, popularly known as the Singhs or the Khalsa. Altogether, the Jats formed nearly a quarter of the total population of the district. They were the most numerous in Tahsil Amritsar and the least in Tahsil Ajnala. They owned 75 per cent of the area under cultivation around 1890 in Tahsil Amritsar, 71 per cent in Tahsil Tarn Taran, and 59 per cent in Ajnala. Of the total number of about 241,000, nearly half belonged to more or less well known clans of the Jats. The most numerous were the Sandhus, Gills, Dhillons and Randhawas, ranging between 28,000, and 15,000 in the descending order. Ranging between 5,000 and 1,000 in the descending order were the Aulakhs, Sidhus, Chahals, Hinjras, Bhullars, Chhinas, Bhangus, Varaiches, Sohals, Chimas, Bals, Dhariwals and Virks. Below 1,000 but more than a 100 in the descending order were the Bajwas, Mans, Sarais, Gurayas, Kahlons, Samras, Pannus, Mangats, Kangs, Ghummans, Deos and Hers. The most important in terms of influence were the Sandhus, Gills, Dhillons, Randhawas, Aulakhs and Sidhus.²⁶

Next in importance to the Jats as proprietors were the Rajputs who were invariably Muslim by religious affiliation. Over 28,000 in all, they belonged largely to the tribes or clans known as the Bhatti, Chauhan, Naru, Chandel, Minhas, Salahria, Manj and Sial. Not all the 'Rajputs' had a genuine claim to that status. In the city of Amritsar, about 5,000 Rajputs were not even owners of land; they were mostly labourers. Among the land-owning Rajputs, the most numerous were in Tahsil Ajnala where they held about 13 per cent of the land under cultivation. Some of them had lost their lands to their erstwhile Jat and Kambo tenants, claiming only *ta'alluqdārī* allowances now. Some others had Arains cultivating their lands as hereditary or occupancy tenants. The Kambos numbered less than 20,000 in the district, found mostly in the tahsils of Amritsar and Tarn Taran. They were not easy to distinguish from the Arains if Muslim, and from the Jats if Sikh. Excellent cultivators, they made good soldiers when enlisted. The Arains were as industrious and frugal as the Kambos, but less enterprising. They were found all over the district, sometimes as small land-holders, often as occupancy tenants, and frequently as tenants-at-will. A few villages in the district were owned by Dogars, and a few still by Gujjars. There were some Shaikhs and Sayyids also among the land-owners. Most of the owners through purchase were Khatri and Arora.²⁷ The later gazetteers

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-55.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-58.

of the district repeat all this information about the proprietary tribes and clans of Amritsar District so closely that their authenticity becomes suspect.

In Gurdaspur District at this time, the most important proprietary tribes or clans were Rajput. According to their own claims they stood divided into Chandarbansi and Surajbansi Rajputs, each with a score of clans. Only a few of them were regarded as the true representatives of the race. They were grouped into three or four major categories. Indifferent cultivators, they were generally regarded as good soldiers. Many of them had embraced Islam since the Mughal times.²⁸ The Jats were next in importance to the Rajputs as proprietors. In fact, whereas the Rajputs were dominant in Tahsil Pathankot and the upper portions of Tahsil Gurdaspur, the Jats were dominant in the south of Gurdaspur and in Tahsil Batala. The most important Jat clans were those of the Randhawas, Kahlons and Riars, followed by Gills, Gurayas, Sidhus, Ghummans, Dhariwals and Sarais. They formed the 'backbone' of the district as revenue-payers and for recruitment in the army. Next to the Jats came Muslim Gujjars and Arains, followed by the Kakkezais, who were treated as Kalals in the late 19th century, but in the early 20th century claimed to be Pathans. The Labanas were found mostly in Tahsil Gurdaspur. A few villages in Tahsil Pathankot were owned by Changs. Several villages in Tahsil Gurdaspur were owned by Harnis who had taken to agriculture only a few generations earlier.²⁹ The assessment reports of all the tahsils of the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar contain detailed information on proprietary tribes and clans.³⁰

The economic survey of a village called Gaggar Bhana in Amritsar District, conducted in the 1920s, provides useful insight into the question of proprietary rights in land during the period of British rule in the Punjab. The average holding in this village had decreased from about 10 acres in 1891-92 to a little over 8 acres in the early 1920s. The total number of holdings in 1922-23 was 208, but the number of owners was more than 460. This was because only 85 holdings were owned by single persons, while 42 were held jointly by two owners, 43 were held jointly by three owners, 20 were held jointly by four, 7 by five, and 11 by more than five owners. However, more than 80 per cent of the holdings were owned equally by single and by two or three owners jointly. Nearly 32 per cent of the owners held 2½ to 5 acres, while 21.5 per cent of the owners held less than 2½ acres each. Those who held 5 to 10 acres accounted for another 22 per cent of the owners. Twenty owners held 10 to 15 acres each, 11 owners held 15 to 20 acres, and 8 owners held 20 to 50 acres. Only one proprietor owned more than 50 acres. Altogether, they formed about 24 per cent of the land-owners of Gaggar Bhana. The bulk of the owners were

28. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer 1892*, quoted, *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1914, pp. 49-51.

29. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1914, pp. 51-52.

30. *A. R. Tahsil Pathankot*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 28

Statement IV; *A. R. Tahsil Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 18-19 &

Statement IV; *A. R. Tahsil Batala*, Lahore, 1889, pp. 27-29 &

Statement VI; *A. R. Tahsil Amritsar*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 12-13 &

Statement VI; *A. R. Tahsil Ajnala*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 12-13 &

Statement VI; *A. R. Tahsil Tarn Taran*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 15-16 & Statement VI.

residents of the village, 131 out of 163. Out of the resident owners, 111 were Jat, and 98 of them cultivated their own land. Those of the Jats who did not themselves cultivate were mostly old men and widows who lived on rent supplemented in a few cases by pension or money-lending. Among the non-Jat resident owners were 9 Brahmans, 6 Jogi-Rawals, 4 carpenters and a Granthi. Two others had employment outside the village. Among the non-resident owners there were 20 Jats, 5 carpenters, 4 Brahmans and 3 Jogi-Rawals.³¹

It is fascinating to note that of the 20 Jat absentees, one was in the army, and three were in the Burma Military Police; four had gone to China, and two worked as Labourers in the Bengal Coal Mines; the remaining ten lived on land in other villages where they had relatives. Of the 5 absentee carpenters one worked in the Railway Workshop at Lahore, another owned 7½ squares of land in a canal colony, two were widows living in other villages, and nothing was known about the fifth. Of the four Brahmans, one was a Head Constable in the Punjab Police, one was a Sub-Postmaster, one was a Sanitary Inspector, and the fourth was a teacher in a District Middle School. The three Jogi-Rawals were father and sons, each of whom had acquired land in their ancestral village by purchase. In addition, the father had received one and a half squares of land as a reward for military service, besides a pension. They all lived in a canal colony.³²

The cultivating holdings in Gaggar Bhana did not correspond to proprietary holdings. Of over 850 cultivating holdings, about 580 were cultivated by single cultivators and about 170 by two cultivators jointly. The number of holdings cultivated by three, four or five cultivators jointly was only a little over 100. There was no cultivator with a holding of more than 50 acres. However, there were 9 cultivators with holdings ranging between 20 and 50 acres. They formed 7 per cent of the cultivators. About 80 per cent of the total number of the holdings were in the hands of cultivators whose cultivating holdings were over 5 acres. Only 25 cultivators tilled a holding of less than 5 acres each. The percentage of cultivators with holdings ranging from 7½ to 15 acres was 45. Thus, the cultivating holdings on the whole were larger than proprietary holdings indicating the importance of tenancy.³³

III

As observed by R. N. Cust, beneath the proprietors were the tenant cultivators divided into three categories: those who cultivated land at will of the proprietor from season to season or year to year; those who had the right of occupancy guaranteed, hereditary, and sometimes transferable, at certain rates, susceptible of judicial fixation and those who held lands at fixed rates for the term of settlement.³⁴ The number of tenants in the last category was very small, only a little over 1,200, and they cultivated less than 10,000 acres. Thus, the important categories of tenants

31. Gian Singh & C. M. King, *An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana*, Lahore, 1928, pp. 48-56.

This was the first of the 'Punjab Village Surveys' conducted and published by the Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59.

34. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Para 15.

were only two, the occupancy tenants and the tenants-at-will. In the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Batala, Amritsar, Ajnala and Tarn Taran, there were nearly 24,000 occupancy tenants in a total number of over 156,000 cultivators including the peasant proprietors. They cultivated nearly 156,000 acres of land in a total area of about 1,287,000 acres under cultivation. Of the total *jama'* of over 2,000,000 rupees they paid over 240,000 rupees. The largest number of occupancy tenants was in Tahsil Gurdaspur, about 5,100, and the smallest number was in Tahsil Ajnala, about 2,850. The tahsils of Batala, Pathankot, Amritsar and Tarn Taran had occupancy tenants in the descending order between 5,000 and 3,000. The maximum area under occupancy tenant was also in Tahsil Gurdaspur, but next to it was Tahsil Amritsar and not Batala, the remaining tahsils having the same descending order as in the number of tenants. The maximum *jama'* came from Tahsil Batala, followed by Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Ajnala, Amritsar and Tarn Taran in the descending order. The amount of *jama'* ranged from 60,500 rupees in Batala to about 22,500 rupees in Tarn Taran. There was no correspondence between the *jama'* and the acreage, because if Batala had about 27,755 acres under occupancy tenants, Tarn Taran had about 21,775. The difference in acreage was only, 6,000 but the difference in *jama'* was more than 38,000 rupees.³⁵

As Douie puts it, the Punjab 'received the distinction between occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will with the rest of its early revenue code from the North-Western Provinces'.³⁶ In the North-Western Provinces, it was common to admit 12-years uninterrupted possession of a holding at the same rate of rent as a sufficient proof of occupancy right. This rule was very generally adopted in the early settlements of the Punjab, and when a distinction came to be made between resident tenants (*āsāmī*) and non-resident tenants (*pāhīkāsht*) the 12-years rule remained applicable to the former though it was extended to 20 years in the case of the latter. In determining the rights as between the proprietors, occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will, there had been no uniformity in practice. After 1857-58, more liberality came to be shown to the landlords and the occupancy tenants were made to pay *mālikāna* even in those cases where in the beginning they were allowed to pay no *mālikāna*. It was in this context that E. A. Prinsep raised the question of landed rights in the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur in the early 1860s. In his argument, occupancy right had no real foundation in village custom or 'even in the condition of things produced by the levelling fiscal administration of the Sikhs', but was in fact a creation of British rule and amounted to 'confiscation by administrative action of the rights of landowners'.³⁷

There was a large degree of truth in Prinsep's contention. Armed with his own conviction and with the sanction of the Financial Commissioner, he changed a few of the recorded occupancy tenants into proprietors; a much larger number continued to be shown as hereditary (*maurūsī*) but the majority were entered as either tenants-at-will or *panāhī*. The latter, as the term suggests, were 'protected' for life, for the

35. *Ibid.*, Appendix XVIII.

36. J. M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, Lahore, 1899, p. 89.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-93.

term of settlement, for fixed periods varying from 2 to 30 years, or 'while some service was performed, some religious institution maintained, or some revenue-free grant was continued'.³⁸

Prinsep's action in the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur became a subject of controversy throughout the British Punjab and eventually led to the passing of the first Tenancy Act, XXVIII of 1868. Prinsep had enquired in 1863 whether or not the position of the so called hereditary tenants who had been recorded as such in the previous settlement was to be reopened. From this letter resulted much correspondence. In the beginning of 1865, a committee was formed by the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab to consider two basic questions : whether or not an officer revising a previous settlement should be empowered to alter records; and whether or not the rules devised by Prinsep regarding the classification of tenants should be amended to become generally applicable. A series of question were circulated to Commissioners to furnish replies themselves and also to obtain them from experienced English and Indian subordinates, and from the intelligent members of the Punjabi community. The drift of the replies on the whole was more in favour of the views and position adopted by Prinsep, but most of the administrators were not in favour of subsequent change on pragmatic grounds.³⁹

After the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868 became operative, the Commissioner of Amritsar wanted to know whether the entries made in Prinsep's settlement respecting the status of tenants were to be allowed to stand until the affected tenant sued or the records were to be altered by the revenue officers *proprio motu*. It was ruled that all proceedings in the then recent settlements, including the settlement of Gurdaspur and Amritsar, in which tenants previously recorded as tenants with a right of occupancy had been recorded as tenants-at-will were to be deemed as invalid. It was also ruled that the required alteration in the records were to be made by erasing the invalid entries with red ink and adding fresh entries in red ink. The task of rectification was entrusted to Agha Kalbabid in Amritsar District and to Qaim Ali in Gurdaspur, each working under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner. A proprietor could go to the court to disprove the assumption that any such tenant had possessed the right of occupancy before the first settlement. Any decree given by the court between the settlement of 1865 and the passing of the Act of 1868 was to be respected whether in favour or against the claims of an occupancy tenant. The cases in which the tenant was recorded neither as having the right of occupancy nor as not having the right were to be left as they were recorded. These were mostly the *panāhī* tenants.⁴⁰ The 'Act of 1868 did not solve

38. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

39. *Selections from Records of the Government of the Punjab, Papers Connected with the Question of Tenant Right in the Panjab*, Lahore, 1869, iii-iv, v-vi & ix-xvi.

For the position of tenants in Amritsar District before annexation, *ibid.*, pp. 48-49; for the known categories of tenants before annexation, *ibid.*, p. 69; for Raja Sahib Dial's view of the situation, *ibid.*, pp. 105-09; Prinsep's sense of injustice to proprietors, *ibid.*, pp. 209-10; his arguments in support of the existence of proprietary rights before annexation, *ibid.*, pp. 211-12; for the views of Qaim Ali and Agha Kalbabid, *ibid.*, pp. 317-18.

40. *Selections from the Records of the Office of the Financial Commissioner Punjab*, Lahore 1889, No LXVIII (Revision of Tenancy Entries in Mr E. Prinsep's Settlements Subsequent to the Passing of Act XXVIII of 1868), 1129, 1131, 1162, 1163, 1174-79 & 1190.

all the problems relating to rights as between the proprietors, occupancy tenants and tenants at-will, partly because of the conflicting claims of the parties concerned and partly because of the conflicting attitudes of the courts and the revenue authorities. The Punjab Tenancy Act of 1887 was meant to remedy some of these defects. The Act of 1887 too was amended subsequently for the same or similar reasons.⁴¹

The number of tenants-at-will in the late 1850s in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar was much larger than the number of occupancy tenants, and it went on increasing partly because new occupancy tenants could not be created after the legislation of 1868. The total number of tenants-at-will according to Cust's *Statistical Report* in the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Batala, Amritsar, Ajnala and Tarn Taran was more than 38,000. They cultivated about 204,500 acres of land and paid revenue to the tune of over 359,500 rupees. More than half of them were in the tahsils of Batala and Gurdaspur; they cultivated nearly half the land under tenants-at-will and paid about half the revenue. Next in importance in terms of numbers, area cultivated and revenue paid were the tenants-at-will in the tahsils of Amritsar and Pathankot. The smallest number was in Tahsil Tarn Taran, less than 3,400; they cultivated less than 20,000 acres and paid about 20,500 rupees in revenue. The number of occupancy tenants, the area they cultivated and the revenue they paid was clearly more than half of the number of the tenants-at-will and the area they cultivated or the revenue they paid.⁴²

About thirty years later, in Tahsil Pathankot, the tenants were divided into several categories for the purpose of assessment. There were some tenants who still paid no rent. Their holdings were over 2,300 but the area they cultivated was less than 1,000 acres. The bulk of the tenants were divided into those 'with right of occupancy' and those 'without right of occupancy.' The former were subdivided into those who paid at revenue rates with or without *mālikāna*, those who paid other cash rents, and those who paid in kind with or without an addition in cash. These three categories of occupancy tenants respectively possessed 5,934 and 762 and 1,024 holdings and cultivated 18,446 and 1,104 and 2,730 acres of land. Thus, their total holdings were 7,720 and the area they cultivated was 22,280 acres. The most important among them were those who paid at revenue rates with or without *mālikāna*. The tenants 'without right of occupancy' possessed 21,110 holdings and cultivated 47,689 acres. They were also divided into the same three categories, and the most important among these was that of 'paying in kind with or without an addition in cash.' The total number of tenant holdings was close to 29,000 and they cultivated nearly 70,000 acres of land.⁴³ This was more than the area cultivated by occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will put together in the late 1850s.⁴⁴

41. Amin Chand Mehta & Mehta Amar Nath (ed.), *The Punjab Court Manual*, Lahore, 1923, for the text of the Tenancy Act of 1887. Also, *Bill Further to Amend the Punjab Tenancy Act, 1887*, Punjab Civil Secretariat A Proceedings, April 1912, File No. 8 R & A; *The Punjab Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1929*, Punjab Government (Financial Commissioner's Office), A Proceedings, November 1930, File No. 613/5/00/15 Revenue/General.

42. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII.

43. A. R. *Tahsil Pathankot*, Lahore, 1891, Statement VI.

44. Cf. R. N. Cust *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII.

In Tahsil Gurdaspur, where the owners cultivated 56 per cent of the area under cultivation, the tenants-at-will cultivated about 33 per cent, and the occupancy tenants cultivated about 10 per cent. Of the area cultivated by tenants, 16 per cent was held by those who paid in kind and 27 per cent by those who paid in cash. Nearly all the occupancy tenants paid in cash. Leaving them out, 18 per cent of the area under cultivation was in the hands of non-occupancy cash-paying tenants, and 15 per cent was with those paying in kind. The total number of holdings of tenants 'with right of occupancy' was about 11,500 and they cultivated about 21,000 acres. The number of holdings under tenants 'without right of occupancy' was over 53,000 and they cultivated more than 77,500 acres of land. Thus, the total number of tenant holdings exceeded 64,500 and the area under tenant cultivation amounted to nearly 99,000 acres.⁴⁵ The number of tenant holdings was nearly four times the number of tenants in the late 1850s, but the area under their cultivation was not much more than the area under tenant cultivation in the late 1850s.⁴⁶

In Tahsil Batala, where the owners cultivated 58 per cent of the area under cultivation, the non-occupancy tenants cultivated 33 per cent and the occupancy tenants cultivated 8 per cent. One per cent of the tenants paid no rent. The percentage of those who paid in cash was 31, while 10 per cent of the tenants paid in kind. The occupancy tenants were mostly Sainis, Labanas and Jats, and they were cultivating lands belonging mostly to Rajputs and Pathans and the Sodhi descendants of Guru Ramdas. It is interesting to note that occupancy tenants were left with less than 7,000 acres after Prinsep's settlement. After the revision of entries by Sayyid Qaim Ali this acreage exceeded 20,000; but it was still less than what it was in the late 1850s, over 32,000 acres. The *duāmī* tenants who belonged to the *panāhī* category of Prinsep, were entered in the records as possessing the right of occupancy with the consent of the proprietors. The area under tenants paying no rent was very small. The total area held by rent-paying tenants was over 65,000 acres and their holdings were over 32,500.⁴⁷

In Gurdaspur District as a whole, there were still many tenants whose status was not exactly determined. In Tahsil Pathankot, for instance; there were 16 such holdings under the *Panāhīs*, 665 under *shartis* or *kabaz* and 262 under occupancy tenants without mention of the relevant section of the Act of 1868. In the tahsils of Gurdaspur and Batala, together, the corresponding figures of holdings were 268, zero and 9,406. The number of holdings clearly under occupancy tenants in these three tahsils was over 25,500, and the area they cultivated was a little over 57,750 acres. The proprietors were inclined to get enhanced rents from the occupancy tenants, and of the 829 suits for enhancement of rent only 59 were rejected.⁴⁸ By the second decade of the 20th century, as we noticed before, the area cultivated by the owners themselves in the district was reduced to 47 per cent of the total area under cultivation. Eight per cent of the cultivated area was held by occupancy tenants,

45. A. R. *Tahsil Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 21-24 & Statement VI.

46. Cf. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII.

47. A. R. *Tahsil Batala*, Lahore, 1889, pp. 35-41 & Statement VI.

48. S. R. *District Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 33-36.

paying mostly at revenue rates with a cash *mālikāna*, or a small *mālikāna* in grain as in Tahsil Pathankot. Under the tenants-at-will there was 44 per cent of the cultivated area, and only one-third of them paid rent in cash. The landlord's tenancy was certainly towards rent in the form of a share in the produce. 'With high prices and a comparative low revenue demand the landlord has come to recognise the great advantage of a kind-rent and in most places is strong enough to impose this form of rent on the tenant'.⁴⁹

In Tahsil Amritsar, the occupancy tenants including the *Panāhīs* held 8 per-cent of the cultivated area. Besides revenue and cesses, they paid rent in cash, plus one or two annas in a rupee as *mālikāna*. The average holding of an occupancy tenant, excluding the mortgaged area, was 2 acres. These tenants belonged to all classes, including Jats who themselves owned lands. The tenants-at-will cultivated 37 per cent of the area under cultivation. Among them were Kambos and Arains, Gujjars and Dogars, Rajputs, Pathans and Mughals, but altogether they held only 21 per cent of the area cultivated by tenants-at-will, whereas the Jats held 42 per cent and others, mostly men from the menial classes, held 37 per cent of the area cultivated by such tenants. Half of the Kambos and Arain tenants were owners of land too. Among the lower caste tenants the most important were *tarkhāns*, who were mostly Sikh. The average holding of a tenant-at-will was 1.6 acres. The total number of tenancy holdings in the tahsil was over 70,000 covering more than 122,500 acres. Out of these the occupancy holdings were less than 11,500 and they covered less than 23,000 acres.⁵⁰

In Tahsil Ajnala, the tenants-at-will cultivated about 67,000 acres or a quarter of the area under cultivation. About a third of them were Jats, and 30 per cent of them were Arains, Gujjars, Dogars, Rajputs, Mughals and Pathans. Among the remaining 37 per cent, the majority were village menials. The average holding of a tenant was a little less than 1.5 acres. The average holding of an occupancy tenant was even smaller, and this class of tenants held 7½ per cent of the area under cultivation. Many among them were *kamīns* who had abandoned their traditional calling. Altogether, the tenants in the tahsil had over 55,500 holdings, covering nearly 80,000 acres of land. The tenants with right of occupancy or protection cultivated over 12,500 acres comprising about 9,800 holdings.⁵¹

In Tahsil Tarn Taran too, a third of the cultivated area was in the hands of tenants-at-will. They were mostly Jats who themselves owned land. Next in number were menials who were obviously more numerous than the Kambos and Arains. In fact the Jats and *kamīns* together accounted for 87 per cent of the tenants-at-will. As a whole, the tenants-at-will had over 59,500 holdings and they cultivated nearly 112,000 acres of land. The holdings of occupancy tenants were less than 9,500 and they cultivated less than 21,000 acres. Among them were included the *panāhīs*. However, the people were not aware of the difference between the *maurusi* and the *panahi*. They both belonged to the same classes; the village menials and artisans

49. S. R. District Gurdaspur, Lahore, 1912, p. 4.

50. A. R. Tahsil Amritsar, Lahore, 1892, pp. 13, 15 & Statement VII.

51. A. R. Tahsil Ajnala, Lahore 1892, pp. 13, 15 & Statement VII.

were rather numerous among them both. Besides the revenue, they paid *mālikāna* ranging from 5 to 12½ per cent of the revenue.⁵²

In Amritsar District as a whole, nearly 8 per cent of the area under cultivation was held by tenants with right of occupancy, and the protected tenants had a higher status than that of the tenants-at-will. They consisted mostly of either the landowners or the menials and artisans. They paid rent in cash, generally a sum equal to the revenue and cesses on their holdings, plus *mālikāna* which ranged from one to two annas in the rupee of revenue. In many cases the rent was enhanced, by the courts and the tenants paid cent per cent *mālikāna*. 'Practically the landlords look on *Panāhīs* as identical with occupancy tenants, and sue for enhancement of their rents as if there was no difference'. In cases of occupancy rights extending to *chāhī* lands, the well remained the property of the landlord, and the tenant had a share only in its water.⁵³ In Amritsar District as a whole, 48 per cent of the area under cultivation was tilled by the actual owners of the land. Some of the proprietors had left for the canal colonies and others had left for the wider pastures beyond the subcontinent, or the rigid discipline of the British Indian Army. The occupancy tenants cultivated 7 per cent of the land under cultivation, and most of them paid a small cash *mālikāna* in addition to the land revenue. The tenants-at-will held 44 per cent of the land under cultivation; most of them paid rent in kind rather than in cash. 'The tendency of late years has been for the landlord to insist on receiving a share of the produce on the better irrigated lands'. He was able to dictate his terms because of the high prices and low assessment. Or, so at least though the settlement officer. He had little to say about the occupancy tenants because their position had not appreciably changed since the previous settlement. In some cases the rent had been enhanced.⁵⁴

The picture presented by the village Gaggar Bhana in Amritsar District in terms of the occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will adds an interesting dimension to the question of tenancy in the 1920s. There were 41 occupancy tenants in the village. Of these 36 did not own any land, 4 of them owned land in the village, and one owned land in another village. Of all the 41 tenants, 29 were *tarkhāns* and 12 were Arains. There were 85 non-occupancy tenants in the village, of whom 47 were Jats who were owners as well tenants. They held 338 acres of land. Seven of the tenants-at-will were occupancy tenants as well; they held 50 acres of land. With the exception of 15, all the tenants-at-will belonged to the village. The 15 outsiders cultivated only 48 acres. There were no written leases. In two cases, the lease was for more than a year, and the tenants in this case took greater pains to cultivate and manure the land under their cultivation. Like the proprietary holdings, the occupancy holdings too were getting fragmented. This was not a new phenomenon, but it was becoming serious because of the rise in population and the consequent pressure on land. There were crude attempts at consolidation. There were only 182 acres which were cultivated by non-proprietary tenants, and of these 50 acres were held

52. A. R. *Tahsil Tarn Taran*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 17-18 & Statement VII.

53. S. R. *District Amritsar*, Lahore, 1893, pp. 60-62.

54. S. R. *District Amritsar*, Lahore, 1914, pp. 6 & 44-45.

by occupancy tenants. The snag about owner-tenants was that they gave greater attention to their own holdings than to land hired on tenancy. 'The tenant pure and simple is a much poorer man than the owner who cultivates his own or another's land, and he cannot afford to keep as good animals'.⁵⁵

In 1931-32 the total area under cultivation in Amritsar District was only a little less than 758,500 acres. About 350,000 acres were cultivated by the owners themselves. Of the remaining over 400,000 acres the occupancy tenants held less than 53,000 acres. The tenants-at-will cultivated nearly as much of the area as the owners. The majority of the tenants-at-will were paying in kind 'with or without an addition in cash', while the bulk of the occupancy tenants were paying at revenue rates 'with or without *malikana*'. The largest acreage under tenants was now in Tahsil Tarn Taran, nearly 164,000 acres; the smallest was in Tahsil Ajnala, with about 91,500 acres; in Tahsil Amritsar, the tenants held over 144,750 acres.⁵⁶ In Gurdaspur District in 1931-32, the total area under cultivation in the three tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala was about 620,000 acres. The occupancy tenants held about 44,000 acres, while the tenants-at-will cultivated more than 225,000 acres. The largest area under tenants paying rent was in Tahsil Batala, over 128,000 acres; the smallest was in Tahsil Pathankot, about 85,000 acres; in Tahsil Gurdaspur the acres under tenants were over 119,000.⁵⁷ Thus, in the Upper Bari Doab as a whole the tenants paying rent cultivated about 733,000 acres out of the total of about 1,378,000 acres under cultivation, accounting for more than half of the cultivated area. In eight decades of colonial rule the land under tenant cultivation increased by more than 100 per cent.

IV

The proprietors and tenants could not cultivate land without the help of certain artisans and menials. In the reports and gazetteers of the period, there are hardly any detailed references to their help. This is understandable. The administrators were interested in collecting information on those aspects of agriculture which were of some practical relevance. Since the artisans and menials did not possess that kind of relevance they were ignored by the settlement officers. Consequently they did not figure in the gazetteers either. Their only relevance for the settlement officers was their share in the produce from land before it was divided between the tenant and the landlord, and this is the kind of information which we have in some of the assessment or settlement reports. For detailed information on castes and professions we have to go to census reports. But the data do not always stand related to agriculture. However, it is possible to form some idea of the role of the artisans and menials in cultivation on the basis of contemporary records.

It is possible to see first of all that the most important artisans and menials for the cultivator in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar were carpenters and ironsmiths (*tarkhān* and *lohār*), leather-workers (*mochī* and *chamār*), potters (*kumhār*), watermen (*jhīwar*) and (*saqqa*), and scavengers (*chuhrā*) who worked

55. *An Economic survey of Gaggar Bhana*, Lahore, 1998, pp. 59-72.

56. *Amritsar District Gazetteer, Statistical*, Lahore, 1934, Table 38.

57. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer, Statistical*, Lahore, 1936, Table 38.

as field labourers as well. Apart from these, the proprietors and tenants needed the services of several other categories of people, not so much for the cultivation of land as for their social life. They needed the weaver (*julaha*) for cloth, and the tailor (*darzī*) for stitching their clothes. The oil-presser (*teli*) served as the carder (*dhunia*) as well. Then there was the barber (*nāī*) with his multifarious functions. The goldsmith (*sunār*) made simple ornaments for the rich and the not so rich. And there were many others.

In the 2,600 and odd villages of the Upper Bari Doab there were about 14,500 households of *tarkhāns* and *lohārs*. Their largest number was in Tahsil Tarn Taran and the smallest in Tahsil Pathankot. Consequently, the number of carpenters and ironsmiths in District Amritsar was much larger than in Gurdaspur, over 8,500 against less than 6000. The leather-workers too were more numerous in Amritsar District, more than 5,000 as against less than, 3,000 in Gurdaspur District. In fact the number of *mochīs* and *chamārs* in Tahsil Tarn Taran alone was nearly as much as in Gurdaspur District. The potters exceeded 4,000 in Amritsar District, while their number in Gurdaspur District was about 2,350. Their number was larger in the tahsils where irrigation by wells was important, in Tarn Taran, Amritsar and Batala rather than in Pathankot, Ajnala or even Gurdaspur. The *jhīwars* too were the most numerous in the tahsils of Tarn Taran and Amritsar, accounting for about two-thirds of the 3,300 and odd watermen in the Upper Bari Doab. The number of *chuhras* in the Upper Bari Doab was not much less than 22,000; a little less than half of them were in the tahsils of Tarn Taran and Amritsar. There were about 10,000 weavers, 2,750 tailors, over 5,500 oil-pressers and carders, over 5,000 barbers and nearly 2,000 goldsmiths in the Upper Bari Doab. On the average, there was less than one goldsmith and more than eight *chuhra* families per village; the average of others ranged between these two.⁵⁸

That many of the artisans and menials who worked for the cultivators were paid in kind is evident from the settlement report of Gurdaspur District in the early 20th century. Before the produce was divided between landlord and tenant, the hired labour employed for harvesting and 'various menials took their toll'. The rate of their dues, the method of payment, and the extent to which harvesters were employed varied considerably in different parts of the country. The hired harvesters took away sheaves of wheat after the day's work as their daily wage. The expenses of cultivation as well harvesting tended to become heavier and heavier due to emigration of menials to less crowded districts or to towns, and due to the general rise in wages. In about 20 years the customary dues of menials for the *Rabi'* harvesting had doubled.⁵⁹ The assessment reports of the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala provided the detail of deductions.⁶⁰

In Tahsil Amritsar the share paid to *kamīns* for the *Rabi'* crops on wells was estimated at 15 per cent of the produce. On *bārānī* lands away from wells, the rate was lower. The average for all *Rabi'* and *Kharīf* crops amounted to 12 per cent. Half

58. R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report, Appendix VII*.

59. S. R. District Gurdaspur, Lahore, 1912, p. 18.

60. The percentages varied from tahsil to tahsil, but only slightly. The similarities remain more striking as a result of the general policy.

of this was taken by the *chuhra* alone, who worked as a full time labourer; the hired reapers on daily basis received payment in addition to this percentage. Grain payments made to artisans who supplied and repaired articles of husbandry were included in this percentage. The established usage was weakening due to the increasing popularity of cash rents and of lump kind rents, and also due to the fact that *kamīns* were increasingly taking to cultivation.⁶¹ The rates in Tahsil Ajnala were estimated at 15 per cent on wells and 12 per cent for all other soils. The rates were going up. The *chuhra* as a labourer was paid in fixed grain.⁶² In Tahsil Tarn Taran, the rates did not exceed 12 per cent in the estimate of the settlement officer on the supposition that all the *kamīns* were paid their share on all crops grown by tenants paying *batāī*. However, the tenants who were themselves *kamīns* paid less. The rates varied from place to place, but on the average the *chuhra* labourer received 6 per cent, the carpenter received 2 per cent, the ironsmith and the potter received 1½ per cent each, and the waterman received 1 per cent of the total produce.⁶³

In the late 1920s the village artisans and menials were defined in one survey as persons who 'in the past were entitled as a matter of right to certain shares of the produce of land'. This was in return for certain duties they had to perform for the benefit of the village community as a whole. But this old custom was falling into disuse, and village menials were being paid more and more for each job they performed instead of receiving an annual payment for all work.⁶⁴ In Gaggar Bhana, the carpenter was the most respectable of the artisans. There were 23 families of *tarkhāns* in the village but only five of them actually worked as carpenters and blacksmiths. Four of them owned flour mills (*kharās*) worked by bullock power; they received a small share from the grain ground, generally about a seer in a maund. One of them had a machine for repairing the rollers of cane-crushers. During the harvest season the carpenters went around the fields to sharpen the sickles of the reapers. They repaired ploughs and wooden well-gear throughout the year. Each carpenter received 16 seers of maize and some other cereals per plough, 2 seers of sugar (*gur*) per plough and the last picking of the cotton field during the *Kharīf*. From the *Rabī* crops he got one sheaf of wheat and 10 seers of the grain per plough, in addition to a quarter sheaf for each visit to the field for repairing implements and sharpening sickles. The majority of the *tarkhāns* had left the village to seek employment outside, in railway workshops and oil companies or the army. One of them had acquired 7½ squares of land in Lyallpur colony as a reward for military services. Many of the *tarkhāns* were tenant cultivators in the village, and a few had acquired proprietary holdings.⁶⁵

The most respectable of the village menials was the *jhīwar* or the waterman. Each *jhīwar* supplies water to a certain number of families, and he received 16 seers of maize for every vessel of water filled daily during the year; he also got a loaf of

61. A. R. Tahsil Amritsar, Lahore, 1892, p. 34.

62. A. R. Tahsil Ajnala, Lahore, 1892, p. 35.

63. A. R. Tahsil Tarn Taran, Lahore, 1891, pp. 59-60.

64. An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana, p. 21.

65. Ibid., p. 22.

bread (*chapātī*) everyday from each family he served. For supplying water to harvesters in the field he received a quarter bundle of wheat for each visit. There were about 100 *jhāwars* in Gaggar Bhana belonging to the 24 families. Most of them had sought employment outside the village, working as fitters and watchmen and shopkeepers. The *jhāwar* acted as a messenger at the time of marriages, and received about one rupee in cash for his services on such occasions. There were half a dozen families of *saqqas* too in the village. They performed for the Muslim families of the village the same services as the *jhāwars* performed for its Hindu families, and received the same kind of payment.⁶⁶

The importance of the potters had declined very much in Gaggar Bhana because of the increasing replacement of earthen pots by iron buckets on the Persian wheels to raise water from wells. For domestic use too, the cultivators paid in cash for pots they obtained from the *kumhārs*. The potters felt obliged to take to carrying loads to nearby markets, rather than making pots. There were only 3 working potters in the village, one Hindu and two Muslim. They sold their pots either for cash or a fixed amount of grain. The *nāī* in Gaggar Bhana was the barber and the chiropodist of the village, working both for Hindus and Muslims. On ceremonial occasions, he acted as a messenger, like the *jhāwar*. There were a few *nāī* families in the village, and they received a certain share from all crops, in addition to cash payment of one rupee for service on certain social occasions. Some of the *nāīs* were lending money on interest to other artisans and menials of Gaggar Bhana.⁶⁷

The number of *chuhra* families in Gaggar Bhana was 58, accounting for 277 persons of the village. They were mostly Sikh, and had a separate Gurdwara of their own. As a day labourer, the *chuhra* received a fixed payment of grain in addition to two meals a day. The grain payment came to about 26 maunds in the year, 10 maunds from all kinds of *Kharif* and 16 maunds from the *Rabi* crops. He also got a pot of juice and 4 seers of *gur* for every 24 hours of work on the cane-crusher. There were 27 families of *chuhras* doing only cleaning work in bullock and cattle sheds. There were 9 families doing cultivation as tenants. A few of them worked as labourers outside the village, earning their daily wages in cash. There was a tendency among them to emigrate in order to get better opportunity for work and wages. Those who worked for the cultivators had their dwelling places in the village and the right to graze their animals in the harvested and fellow fields of the proprietors. For additional work, they were paid in cash according to the amount of labour required for a job. The *chuhras* were the least literate of the village artisans and menials.⁶⁸

Of the other artisans and menials in Gaggar Bhana, there were tailors, priests, leather-workers, weavers, oil-pressers, genealogists, drummers, musicians and Jogi-Rawals. Most of them received payment in kind and cash for the traditional and additional work they did for the cultivators. The Jogi-Rawals performed no specific services and received no regular payment. Like the Khatri shopkeeper and money-lender of the village, some of the artisans and menials lent money on interest,

66. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25 & 26-27.

but mostly to other artisans and menials. Among money-lenders of the village, there were three *tarkhāns*, a *nāī*, a *brahman*, a *julāhā*, a *bharāī* and a Jogi-Rawal. The only person dependent on money-lending in the village was the hereditary Khatri money-lender who had advanced 10,000 rupees on loan and earned about 1,800 rupees a year. Indebtedness was common among artisans and menials as well as the cultivators, and it obliged some of the villagers to migrate for work, or to take service in the army.⁶⁹

V

The British rulers of the Punjab, like their predecessors, needed 'intermediary' agencies between themselves and the proprietors and cultivators. The office of the *chaudhari* was abolished after the annexation, but it was revived by Prinsep in the 1860s in the form of *zaildārs*. Consequently, the *muqaddams* and *chaudharīs* of the Sikh times came to have a rough correspondence with the *lambardārs* and *zaildārs* of the British times. The headman or the *lambardār* of a village acted on behalf of the landowners, tenants and other residents of the village in their relations with the state. His primary duty was to collect the land revenue, and all sums recoverable as land revenue, and to pay them into the treasury. Within the village, his duty was to collect the common fund of the village, known as *malba*, and to use it for various purposes on behalf of the contributors. He received 5 per cent or *pachotra*, of the revenue collected and about 3 per cent on the amount of collections on account of the canal occupier's rate. The number of *lambardārs* recognized as such during the early settlements appeared to be excessive before the end of the 19th century, but reduction was not easily possible. One device which had been adopted in the past was the creation of the office of chief headman, or *a'lā lambardār*, in those villages which had a number of *lambardārs*. The chief headman received 1 per cent on the entire land revenue of the village in addition to his own *pachotra*. In the early 20th century, the system of *a'lā lambardārī* was being gradually abolished.⁷⁰

The duties of the *zaildār* were set out in the *sanad* given to him. With regard to crime, his duties were similar to those of the *lambardār* but his sphere was much larger than that of the latter. They were also bound to aid the government officials in all sorts of revenue work. Without directly interfering in their work, the *zaildār* was expected to see that the *lambardārs* and *patwārīs* worked properly and efficiently. One per cent of the revenue was generally set aside for meeting the expenses of *zaildārī* allowance. The *zaildār's in'ām* was a first charge on the revenue of a village, and it was not affected by partial suspensions or remissions of the revenue. The *zaildār* was usually selected from amongst the *lambardārs*, on the criteria of influence, loyalty and services to the government. Hereditary claims counted in practice but not in theory. The *zaildārī* system was at places supplemented by the agencies of *in'āmdārs* and *safedposhes*. Their remuneration was much smaller than that of the *zaildār*. The records of *zaildārs* was maintained in the form of *zail* books.⁷¹

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26, 85, 87 & 91.

70. *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, Chandigarh, 1972 (reprint), pp. 199-216.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-24; *Punjab Settlement Manual*, Lahore, 1909 (revised edition), pp. 271-72.

As it may be expected from the importance of the *lambardārs* and *zaildārs* for revenue administration and law and order, they figure in the assessment reports of the tahsils and the settlement reports of the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. Proposals for the reorganization of *zails* and the payment of the *zaildārs* at a uniform rate by a deduction of one per cent from the revenue were sanctioned for Tahsil Pathankot by the government in 1889. The *a'lā lambardārs* were in position in the majority of villages having more than one *lambardār*, and they received 1 per cent of the revenue collected in addition to the *pachotra* of their own *lambardāri*.⁷² The *zails* in Tahsil Batala were also reorganized in the late 1880's 'whereby the *zaildārs* are remunerated by a cess in addition to the revenue.' All the fourteen *zaildārs* of the tahsil were to receive more or less equal remuneration because of an appropriate reorganization of their circles. The *zaildārs* in Tahsil Batala were supposed to be useful, but not the chief headmen who were holding assignments worth about 3,700 rupees in addition to their allowance of 1 per cent on the revenue collected. The settlement officer was not in favour of paying their percentage from the *pachotra*, and he was not at all enthusiastic about the system of *a'lā lambardāri*.⁷³ There were 10 *zaildārs* in Tahsil Pathankot, each receiving 236 rupees a year on the average. In Tahsil Gurdaspur, each of its 18 *zaildārs* received 249 rupees a year on the average. There were 15 *zaildārs* in Tahsil Batala, and each on the average received 310 rupees a year. There were 3,400 headmen in these three tahsils, and there were a little less than 1,400 chief headmen. There was a proposal to reduce the number of the latter.⁷⁴

About 20 years later, in the tahsils of Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala the number of *zaildārs* was the same. They were paid by a 'drawback' of 1 per cent of the total revenues of their *zails*. The settlement officer was in favour of retaining the system, recommending at the same time that the *zaildārs* of the district should be placed in three classes: the first receiving 400 rupees a year on the average, the second receiving 300 rupees a year, and the third receiving 225 rupees. The number of headmen and chief headmen decreased in these three tahsils in two decades: there were 628 headmen in Tahsil Pathankot in place of 656 and 1,249 in Tahsil Gurdaspur in place of 1,393 and 1,060 in Tahsil Batala in place of 1,151. The reduction was made deliberately but cautiously. The number of *a'lā lambardārs* decreased much more than the number of *lambardārs*, from 170 to 27 in Tahsil Pathankot, from 702 to 114 in Tahsil Gurdaspur, and from 516 to 163 in Tahsil Batala. In fact it had been decided to abolish the system. The saving made on account of this great reduction in the number of chief headmen was used for remunerating *safedposhes* who were found useful as assistant or under-study of *zaildārs*. It was proposed, therefore, to create a number of *zamindārī in'āms* of 100 and 80 rupees per *safedposh*.⁷⁵

In Tahsil Amritsar, 1 per cent of the land revenue set aside for the *zaildārs*'

72. A. R. *Tahsil Pathankot*, Lahore, 1891, pp. 59-60.

73. A. R. *Tahsil Batala*, Lahore, 1889, pp. 72-73.

74. S. R. *District Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1893, pp. 57-58.

75. S. R. *District Gurdaspur*, Lahore, 1912, pp. 33-34.

pay amounted to nearly 5,500 rupees. In the *nehri* circle they were to lose a good deal by having to forego a percentage on water-advantage rate.⁷⁶ The *zaildārī* percentage in Tahsil Ajnala was to be deducted from both the *khālisa* and the assignments of the value of 50 rupees a year or more. The limits of *zails* were proposed to be altered to have a better correlation with the police *thanas*.⁷⁷ In fact in the district of Amritsar as a whole the *zails* were re-organized in order to ensure that each *zail* covered a certain number of whole Patwari circles, and a certain number of whole *zails* constituted a whole *thana*. However, neither the number of villages in a *zail* nor the percentage of *zaildārs* was uniform. In Tahsil Amritsar, there were 15 *zaildārs*, each getting 349 rupees on the average, with the average of 25 villages in each *zail*. In Tahsil Ajnala, there were 12 *zaildārs*, each on the average getting about 264 rupees, with 29 villages. The actual percentage ranged from 202 to 375 rupees. The system of *a'la lambardārī* appeared to be useless and it was sought to be curtailed. The chief headmen were given cash *in'āms* in place of assignments, and a gradual extinction of the system was allowed. A little less than 4,000 rupees were to be saved through abolition, while *in'āms* worth over 5,000 rupees were to be retained for the settlement.⁷⁸

Before the World War First, the number of chief headmen in Amritsar District stood reduced from 1,134 to 569, and their 'percentage' stood reduced from over 9,000 rupees to about 5,600 rupees. The saving effected was used to strengthen the *safedposh in'āmdārs*. They numbered 92 in all, 32 in Tahsil Tarn Taran, 36 in Amritsar and 24 in Ajnala. The amount of their *in'ām* was increased to 50 rupees a year. In the case of *zaildārs*, whose number in the district was 43, the percentage ranged from 600 to 200 rupees. It was proposed to reorganize the *zails* in a way which minimized the difference in percentage received by each *zaildār*, bringing it close to 350 rupees. Consequently, 9 *zaildārs* received 450 rupees a year and 34 *zaildārs* received 350 rupees a year.⁷⁹ In Gaggar Bhana in the late 1920s, there were four headmen and one of them was also a *safedposh*. They received the amount of 5 per cent of the revenue collected by them as headmen but not out of the revenue collected: this percentage was paid to them out of the cesses.⁸⁰

Cesses were collected under British rule, as during the Sikh times, in addition to the land revenue. In Tahsil Pathankot in the 1850s there were three cesses: local rate or road and school cess, *patwār*, and *lambardārī*. Prinsep added two more in the 1860s: *a'la lambardārī* and *zaildārī*. The number remained five till the early 20th century, but not the amount collected under these heads. There was a general increase in these cesses so that the total rose to 11-11-3 rupees in the 1860s from 7-13-9 rupees about a decade earlier. The total amount of cesses in the late 1880s was more than 20 rupees on every 100 rupees of revenue.⁸¹ Similarly, in Tahsil Batala we start with three cesses in the 1850s and two more are added in the 1860s; there is a

76. A. R. Tahsil Amritsar, Lahore, 1892, p. 61.

77. A. R. Tahsil Ajnala, Lahore, 1892, p. 60.

78. S. R. District Amritsar, Lahore, 1893, pp. 58-60.

79. S. R. District Amritsar, Lahore, 1914, pp. 41-43.

80. An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana, pp. 79 & 80.

81. A. R. Tahsil Pathankot, Lahore, 1891, pp. 60-61.

general increase in the total from less than 10 per cent in the beginning to more than 21 per cent in the late 1880s.⁸² By 1912, however, the local rate stood reduced to less than 9 per cent, and the *patwār* cess stood remitted. As a result, the amount of cesses in Gurdaspur District was less than 14 per cent of the revenue, and the cesses consisted of only the local rate and *lambardārī*.⁸³

In Tahsil Ajnala in 1892, there were three cesses in addition to the local rate : *patwārī*, *lambardārī* and *a'lā lambardārī*. The total of these cesses exceeded 21 per cent of the revenue, and the local rate accounted for about half of the total.⁸⁴ Similarly, in Tahsil Amritsar in 1892, the total cesses exceeded 21 per cent and the local rate accounted for nearly the half, while the other half was on account of *patwārī*, *lambardārī* and *a'lā lambardārī*.⁸⁵ Before World War First, however, there were only the local rate and the *lambardārī* cess, amounting to over 15 per cent of the revenue.⁸⁶ In Gaggar Bhana, the average land revenue for the five years ending in 1924-25 was about 2,850 rupees and the occupiers' rates amounted to about 3,650 rupees. The average of the cesses was a little less than 500 rupees. The incidence per acre of matured area came to a little more than 4½ rupees. It is interesting to note that the cesses amounted to less than 8 per cent of the total but exceeded 17 per cent of the land revenue.⁸⁷

Besides the headman and the chief headman, the *patwārī* was counted among the 'village officers'.⁸⁸ The Punjab Land Revenue Act of 1887 provided for the levy of a cess upto 12½ per cent of the revenue and canal owners' rate for the remuneration of 'village officers.' In 1906, however, the liability of the landowners for paying the *patwārīs* was abolished, and the limit of the cess was reduced to 6¼ per cent, essentially to cover the 'percentages' of the headmen and the chief headmen.⁸⁹ This was a crucial decision in the context of the changing status of the *patwārī* under colonial rule. From an employee of the village community in the beginning, he became an employee of the government within 60 years.

In Tahsil Pathankot in 1891, there were 79 *patwārīs* in all. A *patwārī* circle, obviously, covered quite a few villages. Ten of the *patwārīs* were actually assistant *patwārīs*, each getting 7 rupees a month. The *patwārīs* were divided into three grades: first, second and third, getting 14, 12 and 10 rupees a month, respectively. The *patwār* cess in the tahsil amounted to about 7,200 rupees. This amount was less than the total salaries of the *patwārīs* in position.⁹⁰ In Tahsil Batala, the total number of *patwārīs* in 1889 was 139, and their salaries amounted to 19,500 rupees, while income from the *patwār* cess was less than 15,000 rupees.⁹¹ After the settlement for the district as a whole, the rate of *patwār* cess was over 4 per cent of the

82. A. R. Tahsil Batala, Lahore, 1889, p. 74.

83. S. R. District Gurdaspur, Lahore, 1912, p. 35.

84. A. R. Tahsil Ajnala, Lahore, 1892, p. 60.

85. A. R. Tahsil Amritsar, Lahore, 1892, p. 61.

86. S. R. District Amritsar, Lahore, 1914, p. 40.

87. An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana, p. 78.

88. Punjab Land Administration Manual, Chandigarh 1972 (reprint), p. 183.

89. Ibid., pp. 189-90.

90. A. R. Tahsil Pathankot, Lahore, 1891, p. 60.

91. A. R. Tahsil Batala, Lahore, 1889, p. 74.

revenue, which enabled the government to collect 72,400 rupees while the total expenditure was less than 70,000 rupees. Only in Tahsil Pathankot was the income a little less than the expenditure.⁹² In 1912, in the district as a whole, there were 426 *patwārīs* and 55 assistant *patwārīs*.⁹³ On the average, a *patwārī* still covered more than three villages.

The importance of the *patwārī* in the village comes out clearly in the *Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana*.⁹⁴ He was 'practically a Government servant', receiving fixed pay from the government for maintaining its records. It was not his duty to explain to every cultivator what he was to do, but the headmen being illiterate he took upon himself the task of explaining the intricacies of rights and obligations. Probably the headmen paid him one or two rupees each for rendering this service on their behalf. Besides his pay of 20 rupees a month, the *patwārī* received 40 per cent out of the mutation fees levied on change in the record of rights due to mortgage, sale or inheritance. He also got fees for supplying copies of documents in his charge. At the time of the collection of revenues, he could make some unauthorized collection. It was not due to his formal position, however, that the *patwārī* was important. The nature of the record of rights and its validity in the eyes of the court gave to the *patwārī* a kind of importance which he had never possessed before. In the eyes of the proprietors he was in a sense more important than other official in the revenue administration. A few generations of administrative change had transformed him from a helpful 'servant' into an unobtrusive 'master.'

92. S. R. District Gurdaspur, Lahore, 1893, p. 59.

93. S. R. District Gurdaspur, Lahore, 1912, p. 32.

94. *An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana*, pp. 79 & 80.

MOUNTBATTEN'S ROLE IN TRANSFER OF POWER —A REAPPRAISAL

S. M. VERMA*

Louis Mountbatten was a man of extraordinary talent, drive, dash and dynamism. These qualities had won him many a laurel and honour. He was energetic and ambitious who was known for making quick decisions and executing them effectively. He covered his long distinguished career with memorable achievements which include his brilliant campaigns on the Burma front as a Supreme Allied Commander in South East Asia during the IInd World War. It was the forte of a person of his stature to give orders to Field Marshal Slim to 'Cross the Irrawody' river before the monsoons, 'Whatever the cost' in casualties. 'It was a terrible order to have to give.' His pivotal role as the First Sea Lord Admiral of the Fleet in the post-war reorganisation of the Royal Navy was, indeed, creditable which evoked wide appreciation. His historic assignment as Viceroy of 'British Raj' for ending up the British rule and the creation of two dominions in the sub-continent, has left behind many controversies for the future historians to ponder over.

When Mountbatten was given the first indication of this assignment, he showed his reluctance. Perhaps he feared that it might ruin his naval career and prove the death-knell of his life long ambition to become 'First Sea Lord.' He put forth the steepest terms before the British Prime Minister, Lord Atlee. He demanded a guarantee that afterwards he would be taken back into the Navy without the loss of seniority. The admiralty objected but it was over-ruled and he had his way. He virtually demanded plenipotentiary powers, within the terms of his instructions. He must be allowed to act in his own ways and without interference from London. "You are asking," exclaimed ministers, "to be over the Secretary of State for India." "Exactly", said Mountbatten.² Atlee personally granted all these powers.

The first ever visit of Mountbatten in India was in 1921, along with Prince of Wales. Sullen, hostile crowds, student boycotts, black flags welcome these foreign guests.³ In fact, it was the time of non-cooperation movement, which Gandhi had launched as the ever first non-violent mass movement to free India—ushering in a totally new concept in the world. It was in 1942 that Mountbatten's name was suggested by Lord Amery as a replacement for Lord Linlithgow. But this suggestion

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1. Philips and Wainwright, *The Partition of India—Policies and Perspectives 1935-47*, Massachusetts, 1970, p. 119.

2. *Ibid.*

3. P. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, London, 1985, p. 354.

could not, however, be accepted. In 1946 again, his name was suggested on the plea that he had every qualification that could be required. It was argued that the appointment of King Emperor's (George VI) cousin as Viceroy would appeal to the Indian princes. Mountbatten had also established a fine relationship with Nehru and Krishna Menon and it was told to Cripps that his appointment would be welcomed by Congress 'immensely'.⁴ Atlee's only doubt was whether he would accept the assignment.

Before the announcement of his name as the Viceroy of India, Mountbatten had discussed wider plans, perspectives and allied matters in detail with Lord Atlee. He insisted on the terminal date which should be precise. Without such a date, he maintained, the Indians would never believe that he had in reality come to end and not to perpetuate the Viceregal system.⁵ Atlee already had discussed with his colleagues the precise date, even much before Mountbatten had asked for it.⁶ Therefore, the credit of this idea is not for Mountbatten alone. The date fixed for the transfer of power, to be sure, was flexible one, i.e., within one month, but "You should aim at 1st June, 1948, as the effective date for the transfer of power."⁷

As it happened, the date became operatively null, "but its precision had a profound psychological effect in convincing Indians that the British Government really meant business," says Hodson.⁸

All these negotiations took place by 11th February, 1947 and by 13th Feb., Wavell was informed through a cable about the new appointment. Although Wavell was in London and negotiations with Mountbatten were going on for the last two months, yet he was not given any hint of this change. When Wavell received the cable, he remarked "an unexpected appointment, but a clever one for their point of view and 'Dickies' personality may perhaps do, what I have failed to do. They have sacked me, George."⁹

On 18th March, Atlee wrote to Mountbatten :

It is the definite objective of His Majesty's Govt. to obtain a unitary Govt. for British India and the Indian states, if possible within the British Commonwealth; there can be no question of compelling either major party to accept it...Mountbatten was to report back by 1st October, if the negotiations had proved to be abortive, then he would suggest steps to transfer power by 1st June, 1948 or within a month or so of that date....

Mountbatten arrived in India on 22nd March, 1947. He sincerely started negotiations for a United India, but after meeting leaders of all shades especially Jinnah, he was sure this proposal would not work out. Jinnah would go on with Pakistan which should include the whole of Punjab and Bengal; if this was not acceptable then he stood for partition of these provinces.¹⁰ Indeed, he would have

4. *Ibid.*

5. Manseragh, *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. IX, London, 1980.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 374.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 973.

8. Fn. 1, p. 118.

9. P. Moon, ed. Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, London, 1973, p. 419.

10. Fn. 3, p. 368; Ch. Mohammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, New York, 1967, p. 125.

sacrificed even these two provinces altogether, if he could have had Pakistan on no other terms.

Punjab had been an example of observing secular traditions. Although the Muslims were in majority, yet both the communities had been living in peace till 1945. An agrarian based Unionist Party had dominated the politics of Punjab. But during the IInd World War, the Muslim League had worked hard to win over the support of Muslims in the province. Not only had they convinced the peasantry that their future lay with Pakistan after the British left, but they had also won the votes of the Muslim political and religious leaders. Support of the Unionist Party dwindled as Jinnah was clamouring for Pakistan; the Muslim League was taken up as the only spokesman of the Muslims.¹¹ No wonder, therefore, the Muslim League captured 75 seats in the Punjab Assembly Elections held in 1946 and came out as the single largest majority party. The Unionist Party could secure only twenty seats, as compared to 95 seats got by them during the Elections in 1937. The Muslim League apprehended the evil designs of the British Government, when Khizar Hyat Khan submitted his resignation and instead of asking Muslim League to form Government, the Governor, Mr. Jenkins, made himself directly responsible for the administration of Punjab with Mountbatten at his back.¹² This decision of Jenkins added fuel to the fire. The communal divide widened; violence took over. There were cases of violence both in the Muslim and Hindu Sikh dominated areas. At the time when Mountbatten arrived in Delhi (22 March), Jenkins was sending almost daily despatches reporting violence in the province. The worst affected areas were Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Gurgaon, Lahore and Amritsar.

In one of his despatches he wrote :¹³

The Hindus and Sikhs are for the time being together; it should be noted that the Hindus have their own militant wing the RSS, whose paper the 'Organiser' proclaimed doctrines that would have warmed the heart of Rosenberg.

Allan Campbell Johnson, who came with Mountbatten as his press attachee also remarked, "we have inherited inter alia communal rioting and the key province of Punjab with three fold of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, communal problem governed by emergency decrees."¹⁴

The communal virus was spreading in other districts of Multan, Rawalpindi and Attock. The atmosphere was getting vitiated. The Congress party had passed a resolution on 18th April, 1947 in which they accepted the inevitable division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the Muslim majority area may get separated from the non-Muslim community. The Sikh leaders jointly with Hindus as well as separately insisted upon the division of the Punjab and the Akali Dal asserted the partition of Punjab as 'the only remedy to end communal strife.' Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh expressed similar views during their interviews with Mountbatten on 18th April, 1947.¹⁵

11. Trevor Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj*, London, 1989, p. 201.

12. Latif A. Sherwani, *The Partition of India and Mountbatten*, Delhi, 1989, p. 180.

13. Allan Campbell Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, London, 1951, p. 282.

14. *Ibid.* p. 40.

15. Indian Annual Register, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1947, p. 244; also see Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of Punjab*, Patiala, 1972.

Despite giving verbal assurances or occasional commitments in writing, Mountbatten did not take seriously the communal eruptions engulfing Punjab and NWFP provinces. Perhaps, he could never foresee or imagine that this problem would engulf the lives of more than one million people.¹⁶

It is strange that such an astute and clear-headed administrator, could not visualize the magnitude of the problem; perhaps, he was too busy in the 'plan' through which the Indian dominion was to be divided into two countries on the basis of religion.

On 18th May, Mountbatten left for London, with the plan, which had the tacit approval of the League and Congress leaders. The Indian Committee in the Cabinet considered the proposal and with little suggestions, the plan was approved. Atlee paid remarkable compliments to the skill and initiative which the Viceroy had undertaken. Mountbatten of his own also got a promise of safe passage of the partition plan from the Conservative party and its leader, Churchill.¹⁷

Surprisingly, Mountbatten and other experienced leaders did not give a serious thought to communal violence, which was taking worst shape in India and particularly in the provinces of Punjab and NWFP. There were discussions on the proposal of partitioning the provinces of Punjab and Bengal. None considered or suggested how such a large migration of people would take place. What policy or method was to be adopted? How the communal problem was to be tackled? How much force was required? It seems that there was no reference to such things in the discussions.

On 31st May, 1947, Mountbatten along with Lord Ismay returned to Delhi. On 3rd June, 1947, the plan was discussed and approved by the major political parties. In the press conference, Mountbatten gave the date of 15th August, 1947 as the date of transfer of power, whereas earlier in one of his interviews with Jinnah, Mountbatten did mention of transfer of power by October 1947.¹⁸

The announcement of 15th Aug., 1947, was a surprise for the aides of Governor-General. In fact, many talented persons, dedicated professionals, who advised differently were totally ignored. Mountbatten appeared to have been little impressed by their opinions. It seems that Mountbatten had more trust in his 'instincts' above those of his advisors.

What were the compelling reasons for speeding up the transfer of power? A country of 35 crore people was to be divided and that too where sizeable population was caught in the frenzy of communal strife. 'Speed' perhaps motivated Mountbatten's action. Was it a War? It was a question of homes, human beings and two new nations were to be born. It was to be like the birth of a newly born baby in a perfect environment. But, what actually took place was a mutilated baby, with the infection of communal virus trauma of which is being felt even now.

Surprisingly, no less responsible were the Indian leaders like Nehru,¹⁹ Patel,

16. The number is controversial; different scholars given different numbers....a debateable issue.

17. Fn.5, Vol. X, No. 74, p. 313.

18. Fn. 5, p. 872.

19. The doubt was working in the minds of Congressmen that Gandhi may not agree to the partition. But Mountbatten had met Gandhi on 2nd/3rd June and got his approval of the partition plan. Gandhi remarked 'partition is tragic but inevitable,' Pyare Lal, *Gandhi*, 1971, p. 270.

Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. They readily approved of Mountbatten's speedy action, obviously for no other reason than their restless ambition to attain independence at an early date. They all tended to minimise the danger of a massive communal eruption; their attitude at best reflected a desire to let nothing stand in the way of independence. To assume that they were still doubtful of British intentions of granting independence is tantamount to closing eyes to writings on the wall.

The country was to be divided, was very much on the cards. Mountbatten himself in his interviews and meeting of the provincial Governors had clearly talked about the partition of the country. What restrained the Indian and the Muslim leadership of warning Mountbatten of the impending catastrophe is mind boggling?

Hodson, the author, of *The Great Divide*²⁰ who remained Reforms Commissioner in India and Constitutional Advisor to the Viceroy in 1941-42, claimed that Mountbatten loved talking and discussions on any matter, before taking any decision. It was "the essence of his method... often he made up his mind by the process of putting up an idea or a problem to his intimate staff in his daily meetings, listening, contributing to their arguments and observing their reactions..." If Mountbatten was in possession of this godly gift of 'discussion', why the matters like the gruesome pillage, brutal and broad-day murders and massacres were not discussed and taken care of. When the Viceroy was discussing his 3rd June plan with the leaders, there was no mention of any clause regarding 'migration' which would take place when the provinces of Punjab and Bengal would be divided. It appeared that the partition proposals were agreed like shuffling of cards but there was no realization of the impending dangers to the lives, properties of the millions. At any rate the implications of the decision were neither visualised nor considered with the urgency they deserved.

In fact, the announcement of the date, without any proper planning and preparation for the eventuality aggravated the whole situation. With the result, the communal violence got triggered off, the unforeseen and the unplanned mass migration also got impetus.

Mountbatten claimed that the date of 15 August was an inspiration as it coincided with the date of the first anniversary of his appointment as supreme commander.²¹ Should it be considered a logical reason? To wind up a three and half centuries old empire within 150 days (22 March—15 August) was not an easy task. There was definitely a casual approach in deciding 15 August as a date of transfer a woeful lack of preparatory steps for smooth transfer in violence-free environment.

A leading British historian Andrew Roberts observes:²²

Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of the British India deserved to be impeached for his negligence and incompetence, which led directly to the deaths of several hundred thousand people and the displacement of millions during the transfer of power...the communal disturbances, arson, loot, indiscriminate murders, rape, desecration of temples, mosques were the results of Mountbatten advancing the date of partition...

20. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, London, 1969, p. 531; also see Fn.1, p. 121.

21. Fn. 3, p. 388.

22. *The Tribune*, 26-7-1994.

It has been contended that there was a lot of wisdom in Atlee's announcement of the date of Transfer of Power as June 1948—the spread of 9 to 10 months was to be a period of planning and preparation in which serious thoughts could have been given to the question of communal problem and migration of millions. On the other hand, it has been argued that the orgy of communal riots and the restless ambition of the leaders of Muslim League to own power by the formation of Pakistan were among the compelling reasons for pre-poning the transfer of power. Be that as it may, Mountbatten can't be exonerated from the responsibility of the tragic and, to a certain extent, avoidable, horrors and havocs that accompanied the transfer of power. He could have taken some effective measures in advance so as to mitigate the miseries and misfortunes of million who became the unfortunate victims of the partition of the country.

Another avoidable blunder committed by the then Viceroy was the appointment of Cyril Radcliff²³ to draw the frontiers between India and Pakistan. In the 3rd June plan it was mentioned that a notional division of the Punjab would be done. The appointment was approved by the partition council in their first meeting held on 27 June, 1947. This commission consisted of 4 other members and the amendment of the independence bill's section IV was undertaken. The word 'Award' was added, which meant the binding of the decision of the Chairman of the Council. In the notional division, the district as a unit was taken and accordingly the division was undertaken. But the word 'Area' mentioned in the terms of reference became a subject of legal controversy.

The commission called for memorandum of claims from different parties by 18th July.

Radcliff arrived in Delhi on 8th July, 1947. He had to decide the future homes, land, livelihood and nationality of 8 crore people. His only briefing for this gigantic task was 30 minutes' meeting as he²⁵ himself remarks frankly. "a thirty minute session over a large scale map with the permanent under secretary at the India office."

The time frame work was five weeks and when Nehru met him for the first time, he suggested that if the work was done before five weeks, it would be better for the situation. This was Radcliff's first visit to India and as such he had no intimate knowledge or experience about India and its affairs. It was obviously impossible for the commission to divide a country on satisfactory lines in such a short time; the anomalies and injustices were bound to occur. A little more time, patience and research might have saved endless bickerings of the future. Mosley comments :

"It was a quick decision of amputation and that would mean bloodshed."

The team of judges which collaborated with Radcliff told him plainly that they would assist him, advise him, but all decisions will be yours. But at the same time it was alleged that judges in Punjab did not cooperate with him and there were cases

23. Mr. Redcliff was appointed on the suggestion of Mr. Jinnah, the Secretary of State. Confirmed the choice, whom he described as a man of integrity, legal reputation and wide experience, Fn. 15, p. 77.

24. The four other members were Justice Din Mohammad, Mohammed Munir, M. C. Mahajan and Teja Singh.

25. L. Mosley, *The Last days of the British Raj*, London, 1962, p. 195.

of intrigue also.

The mammoth task was done in less time, that is in 30 days only. Radcliff flew back to London on 15 Aug., 1947, "Amazing people", he said, "They had absolutely no conception. They asked me to come in and do this sticky job for them and when I had done it, they hated it."

It is significant to observe that by the beginning of April, people in the Punjab had already started migration of their own. Mr. Jenkins, the Punjab Governor was regularly sending his despatches to the Viceroy in which he was repeatedly reminding the Government of the impending danger. In one of his despatch on 10 July, 1947, Jenkins wrote regarding an interview he had with Giani Kartar Singh, the spokesman of the Sikhs :

...In Punjab, there would have to be an exchange of populations on a large scale, were the British ready to enforce it ? He doubted, if they were and if no regard was paid to Sikh solidarity, a fight was inevitable.

Jenkins further warned Mountbatten on 13 July :²⁶

...the communal frenzy is unbelievable, bad, the Sikhs feared that they will be massacred in West Punjab. They threaten a violent rising immediately.

Mountbatten should have taken these warnings seriously. The Punjab Boundary Award could have been delayed till such a time, when the proper arrangements under army or any force of substance were ensured. He should have taken prompt measures to check terror, anarchy and lawlessness. Himself a brilliant general, Mountbatten should have given priority to the establishment of law and order by taking adequate and effective measures. The creation of Punjab Boundary Force under Gen. Rees in July was merely an apology. How could a small force of 23,000 people keep a check and control on 18000 towns and villages involving 14 million people, who were caught in the frey of communal frenzy. This act of the Viceroy was very close to inefficiency and mismanagement, Andrew Roberts comments :²⁷

It is shameful that an empire which had three years earlier landed 14 divisions on the beaches of Normandy, could not put more than handful of volunteer officers into the task of peaceful winding of two centuries old Raj.

He further says :

Mountbatten should have divided the Armies of India and Pakistan and their deployment in the disputed areas with law and order established through martial law, if necessary, followed by the announcement of where the boundary would be.

The then senior civil servants like Sir George Cunnigham, the Governor of NWFP at the time of independence claimed in a letter to Lord Halifax that "the opinion of most sensible people out here is that the trouble was enormously aggravated by the speed with which everything was done. Lord Halifax was inclined to agree that the acceleration of independence from June 1948 back to August 1947 was the principal reason of the massacres.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

27. *The Tribune*, 26-7-1947.

Gen. Candeth, who was Brigadier at that time and was serving in Jalandhar believed that "the violence would have been much worse but for the presence of army."²⁸ This statement explains that adequate and well-planned army deployment would have saved Punjab from unnecessary bloodshed.

The transfer of power was not peaceful. There was blood, tears, loot, plunder, slaughter and massacres. It resulted in more than half a million casualties and migration of more than 8 million people.²⁹

In Bulgaria and Greece (1929 Convention of Nevely) the national minorities had the right of leaving the country under conditions which would guarantee them full value of properties left behind, whereas in East Punjab and the West Punjab, the minorities were made to quit their hearths and homes in the most adverse circumstances created by communal riots and they had to reach the country of their destination as paupers.³⁰ This massive migration accompanied by widespread miseries was unprecedented in history.

In assessing Lord Mountbatten's role in the partition of India, one has to go back to the stage of his asking for more powers from Lord Atlee as Viceroy, than his predecessor. He got plenipotentiary powers. In a way he was supreme. He could suggest, alternate or reject any proposal. For instance, before 3rd June proposals were formulated he sent Lord Ismay to England with a plan for approval from the British Cabinet. But later on he virtually withdrew that plan to the utter surprise of Lord Ismay and the British Cabinet. The Cabinet members protested. The situation was so confused that either a ministerial delegation must fly to Delhi under Cripps was suggested or Mountbatten should fly to London. Mountbatten refused any visit of the delegation; "as it would have undermined his unique personal authority in India."³¹

Mountbatten with new proposal with the tacit approval of Indian and Muslim leaders, landed in London on 18 May, 1947. These new proposals (3rd June plan) were approved by the British Cabinet as they had a fear that if this plan was not approved, Mountbatten might resign.

These hectic changes in the plan and the dictatorial behaviour of the Viceroy was against the established norms of the governance and previous practices. Normally, the office of Secretary of State was always taken in confidence and consultation before taking any decision on Indian matters. This practice was in vogue since the days of Lord Canning. Why Atlee Govt. did not check this erosion of the established practice? Perhaps, a ministerial delegation's visit would have taken an overall view of the communal problem, questions of migration etc. They might have looked to the situation with a different perspective. They might have suggested ways and means to sort out certain problems, which later on became gigantic in nature. It seems that this opportunity was missed by simply one reason—the 'ego' of an individual. The question in hand was the creation of two new

28. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

29. Fn.11, pp. 196-97.

30. *Millions on the Move*, Publication Division of India, p. 10.

31. Kirpal Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

countries—a serious thought and not 'individual ego' should have determined the fate of millions. This policy of 'no resistance' adopted by the British Cabinet does not absolve Atlee Govt. from the sins of omissions and commissions. Perhaps the British Govt. was tired of or fed up with Indian problem and wanted to get rid of it as early as possible.

Lord Mountbatten was a great naval officer and a grand military strategist. He proved his worth on the Burma front and other naval exercises. During his stay as Viceroy in India, too, was actuated by the 'Speed' of a General rather than by an astuteness of an Administrator. These qualities of speed, agility and surprise are definitely assets of a General in a war-like situation, but in India the situation was not of war. A statesman—like approach studded with diplomacy and human considerations would have given better dividends. Perhaps, a more considerate person, who was well apprised with Indian problem might have been a better choice. The criteria of selecting Mountbatten as the last Viceroy of India was primarily due to his royal lineage as well as his experience as Admiral on the Burma front. Earlier to it he was never involved in Indian affairs and his first visit to India was way back in 1921. Any other statesman, who had knowledge of Indian affairs with plenipotentiary powers might have perhaps effected the transfer of power in a better manner.

Gen. Tucker, who was Lt. General of the Eastern command at that time gave a plan for partitioned India. He suggested that in case of partition, there must be a neutral force to prevent the inevitable collision on the new frontiers of Hindustan and Pakistan. He suggested that 'Gurkha Troops' should be earmarked as 'neutral force.' Tucker felt that had his plan of putting the neutral force along the Punjab boundary implemented, the migration would have taken place in an orderly manner. Gen. Tucker claimed that he had visualized the communal problem and its violence and, therefore, he had made arrangements in Calcutta and other places, by deploying army in sensitive points. He was convinced that the safety of Calcutta and Eastern India depended upon preventing the Punjab contagion from spreading in the United Provinces.

Gen. Tucker told Gen. Ismay to convince Mountbatten about the merits of the plan. But his plan was never seriously taken into consideration. It is surprising when in far flung areas of India like Eastern India, Army was making contingency plans to keep the law and order in their areas, why these plans were not made in Punjab and its surrounding areas where people were facing communal rioting of a grave nature?

Particularly in Punjab, Mr Jenkins, the Governor, was sending warnings in the despatches to the Viceroy. "Step by step, Delhi had been advised of the increasing gravity of the situation in Punjab. The warnings were there. The Viceroy had at least three chances to avert a massacre and each time, from weariness, from lack of foresight or from aversion to another clash with Jinnah—he looked the other way. The results were disastrous, says Mosley." "Mistakes after mistakes were committed by the Viceroy at that time. When one considers how much good-will there was

behind Britain's wish to give India her freedom, what a stinking bog of unpreparedness, blunders and appalling lack of planning separated the wish from achievement."

S. R. Mehrotra³³ has written that the "partition of India was carried out with exemplary speed and smoothness, amidst circumstances which would have deterred a lesser man."

Surely and definitely, the partition was done with exemplary 'speed' but to call it 'smooth' is historically inaccurate. Millions of people lost lives, more than 8 million people had to leave their lands, hearths and homes to an unknown area like paupers. The 50th anniversary of independence has revived their memories of the past horrors. To say that those circumstances would have deterred a 'lesser man' appears to be far-fetched statement.

It was really unfortunate that when people were killed here, butchery was taking place in Punjab, Delhi and surrounding areas, Mountbatten was recommending his aides for rewards and awards. He himself was given the title of 'Earl' for his services in India. Many of his aides were Knighted or given K.G.S.I. title.³⁴

Heroes are after all human beings. They too have chinks and gaping holes in their shimmering armour. The charisma of their personality hides them somewhat effectively. Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, was no exception to the charge. The 14th August mid-night freedom may legitimately be attributed to Mountbatten's determined and zealous endeavours but the historians, in this 50th year of Indian independence, are inclined to put a question mark to what he had probably failed to do. He had taken no practical steps to mitigate the agonies and sufferings of millions of innocent people who became so to say the 'scapegoats of independence.' The purport of this article is no more than to draw attention to the need of reappraisal of Mountbatten's role in the transfer of power.

33. Fn. 26, p. 216.

34. Fn. 1, p. 219.

George Abell Johnson was Knighted, C. Auchinleck C-in C. as 'Baron' and Lord Ismay as K.G. S. I. which he declined in the end.

CENTRE STAGE TO PERIPHERY : SOME QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE UNIONISTS, 1937-1947

K. C. YADAV *

I

The thirties were in a certain sense troubled years for India : its economy was in bad shape, polity was disturbed, there was chaos and confusion in the social field. In one word, things had gone wrong almost everywhere : deeply and frighteningly. Now only some miracle could have effected improvement in this situation.

Though miracles seldom come when needed, here people were lucky—a miracle came in the form of the Government of India Act, 1935, which changed life—one could say, for the better—in almost all its aspects in some way or the other.¹ Almost all sections of the Indian society were touched by its impact everywhere, though in varying measures.

The Unionist Party in Punjab, with which this study is concerned, was influenced by the 'miracle' to an extent as perhaps no other institution was influenced, not only in the Land of the Five Rivers but in the entire country. But before we move in the matter further, it seems pertinent to give some background material about the Unionist Party² here, for without that the perception of things to come before us would not be infocus.

The story should begin with 1923 when the party was formed by Sir Fazl-i-Husain³ a Muslim landlord and lawyer from West Punjab. He was a Congressman but had parted company with his party on the issue of non-cooperation programme adopted by Gandhiji after the Rowlatt Act had come into being (1919). A moderate constitutionalist, he wanted the battle for *swaraj* to be fought on legal plane. Another Congressman, Sir Chhotu Ram from Haryana, who had also left the party for the same reason, joined hands with Fazli and gave a sort of secular outlook to the new outfit. Its main centre of activity was the village, especially the farming communities living there. Its leadership was for the most part drawn from *biradari* and traditional

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1. For a discussion on this, see A. C. Banerjee, *The Constitutional History of India, 1600-1972*, Delhi, 1979, Vol. III.
2. For details about the Unionist Party, see R. Tanwar, 'The Unionist Party in Punjab, 1923-1947', Ph. D. Thesis, Kurukshetra University, 1989.
3. There are many write-ups on him. But todate the biography done by his son Azim Husain, *Mian Fazl-i-Husain : A Political Biography*, London, 1946, is by far the best.

leaders, like landlords, *chaudharis*, *zaildars*, *pirs*, *ulema*, *sajjadanashins*, *mahants*, *derawallahs*, etc. who, without an exception, held big land holdings. These people had large traditional following, too, which served as party's rank and file.⁴

Some scholars believe that this was a novel experiment made in Punjab for the first time and praise its architects skyhigh.⁵ A closer scrutiny of the whole thing shows, however, that the experiment was an extension of a political process, namely modernization of tradition, which the British bureaucracy had been following in India since they assumed the reins of government here.⁶ This was, in other words, something like putting old wines in new bottles and giving them new modern names. A wonderful thing indeed. For in a minute, the old *biradari* or traditional leaders were metamorphosed into 'modern' leaders to suit the modern needs and situations.

The British Government looked favourably towards the Unionist Party for two obvious reasons : one, the Party standing for constitutional means to effect any political change was a lesser evil when compared with Congress which was in almost a total revolt against it; and two, the feudal element and others who formed the social base of the Unionists were the government's 'own men'—its subordinate collaborators, if not lackies.⁷ And it was precisely for this reason that the government listened to the party bosses, and cared for its social base so that it could become strong and give it strength in return.⁸

As a result, the Unionists soon assumed number one position in the Province.

II

As noted above, the Government of India Act, 1935 a miracle of sorts. It caused a great stir in the contemporary political life everywhere. Their public postures or for-the-galleries utterances apart, almost all the political parties were attracted in a big way by the 'part-swaraj' (provincial autonomy) which the Act had given and they rushed to acquire it. This explains as to why the first elections which were held under this Act in 1937 were fought on an unprecedented scale.⁹

The Congress rushed in with the greatest sound and fury in the crucial electoral battle. But amazingly, it hardly effected any improvement in its old, almost half-dead party organization to meet the new situation. Similarly, the Muslim League, which was in equally bad shape, also appeared to be in Caesarian mood to see and conquer everything. But all said and done, the latter's leadership was certainly smarter than the former's. The League supremo, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, for instance, made many wise moves. He came to Punjab. Unlike Congressmen, he accepted that

4. This has been discussed at length by R. Tanwar in his thesis cited above.

5. For this view see Y. P. Bajaj, 'Sir Chhotu Ram and his works', Ph. D. Thesis, Kurukshetra University, 1972; Tika Ram, *Sir Chhotu Ram : A Political Biography*, Hissar, 1979; D. C. Verma, *Sir Chhotu Ram, Life and Times*, Delhi, 1981.

6. See Azim Husain, *op.cit.*

7. For details see Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947*, Delhi, 1988.

8. K. C. Yadav, *Elections in Panjab, 1919-1947*, Tokyo 1981, p.132.

9. For the 1937 election details see *Ibid*, pp. 74-106.

his means and organization were pretty weak¹⁰ and, therefore, embarked on a novel strategy—to fight the election on borrowed strength. He approached Sir Fazl-i-Husain who was the greatest and the most powerful leader among the Muslim politicians in India at that time. Understandably, he threw his net on Fazli : Offering him the presidentship of the All-India Muslim League (Bombay Session, January 1936), Jinnah wrote on 5 January :

I feel that at this moment no one can give better lead to the Musalmans of India than Yourself...we want a man of your calibre and experience, and nobody can well, at this critical moment, as far as I can see, perform that duty and render that service to the community as you would be able to do.

In the end, Jinnah spelt out the consequences should Fazli negate the proposal : "Your refusal", said he, "will be the greatest misfortune and terrible disappointment."¹¹

Fazli was, however, too clever to be caught in the net. He knew what would be the consequences of his 'aye' to Jinnah's proposal. After getting adequate safeguards in the new constitution, he did not want to take the Muslims away from the national mainstream. So he went in just the opposite direction to Jinnah : he carried talks with the Congress leadership at the centre through Bhulabhai Desai, and at the provincial level through his friend Raizada Hans Raj—"to make common cause with us."¹² The Congress failed to see the gains of such a move, and its bourgeois leadership gave just one more evidence of its shortsightedness.¹³ It did not join hands with the Unionists. Had they done so, I think, India's history would have taken a different turn.

Inversely, Jinnah pursued his mission with unabated zeal. He made second bid to avail of what was missed by the Congress. He formed the Muslim League Central Parliamentary Board and urged upon Fazli (April 1936) to fight the elections under its banner. Fazli, however, negated the proposal of Jinnah once again with the same old swiftness. Neither principle, nor expediency permitted him to do so : Joining hands with the Muslim League would mean, as already noted, taking the Muslims away from the mainstream; and denying him of a chance to form ministry in new Punjab, for, as he said, "I shall be in a position to field only 86 Muslim members from the Muslim constituencies". His communal propaganda for his candidates would "have strong reaction among the Hindus and Sikhs and Chhotu Ram's position will be compromised and weakened in his area." And this way, "I shall be instrumental in defeating a group which has been supporting me for 12 years." Then, "86 is not a majority in the House of 175, how would we be able to form the ministry."¹⁴

10. Ispahani, a right hand man of Jinnah has drawn depressing picture of those days when "the League had not of course fifty coppers in its coffers. There was no office. The President and Secretary both honorary carried their offices in their respective portmanteaux." *Quaid-i-Azam : As I Knew Him*, Karachi, 1976, p. 20.

11. Jinnah to Fazli, 5 January, 1936, vide *Letters and Notes of Fazl-i-Husain*, Lahore. p. 7.

12. Azim Husain, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-04.

13. And this very thing they did in 1946. But then it was too late—1946 was not 1936.

14. Azim Husain, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-40.

He told Jinnah not to meddle in the affairs of not only of Punjab but of other provinces also. Let them fight their battles the way they like in view of their local conditions, he advised the Muslim League leader. If he wanted to have some understanding with them, he could do that after elections.¹⁵ Jinnah was deeply angry and observed : "Fazli¹⁶ thinks he carries the Punjab in his pocket...I am going to smash him." But it was by no means an easy job, Jinnah had to walk away from Punjab, saying : "I shall never come to the Punjab again."¹⁷

Having showed Jinnah his way, Fazli started organizing his party on modern lines.¹⁸ The feudal remnants of the past, plus new landlords, *jagirdars*, and their religious counterparts, *pirs*, *ulema* etc., he knew, will not be able to do much in the new modern power game. He, therefore, took peasantry and plebeian elements as his social base.¹⁹ A central command of leadership was formed. Party branches were proposed to be opened at district and tehsil levels. A new programme with ample emphasis on economic problems and political stability was devised. It was a great feat indeed.²⁰ But before it was turned into a reality the master-organizer passed away on 11 August, 1936.²¹

Sikandar succeeded Fazli as leader. Chhotu Ram took to organizational work; and the thread left by Fazli was taken up in right seriousness. As a result, the Congress, a divided house, got badly demoralized, and Muslim League turned almost lifeless.²² The election results show their position in a better manner (Table 2)

Table-2
PARTY-WISE POSITION IN THE PANJAB LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1937²³

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats won</i>
1. Unionists	98
2. Congress	18
3. Khalsa National Party	13
4. Hindu Maha Sabha	12
5. Akali Party	11
6. Ahrars	2
7. Itihad-i-Millat	2
8. Muslim League	2
9. Congress Nationalists	1
10. Independents	16
Total	175

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

(Contd. on next page)

The league, as the above table shows, fared very badly. That it could have won two seats in a province where Muslims were in majority was a sad commentary on its existence. It received further setback when even one of its two members—Raja Gazanfar Ali Khan—resigned from the party and joined the Unionists. Now League representing Muslim communalism had only one member, Malik Barkat Ali, sitting in the Assembly comprising 175 members.²⁴

Having majority (99), the Unionists formed the ministry. It was an experiment of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs working together in a friendly spirit.²⁵ Clearly, things were moving in the right direction. But suddenly there came a blow from the blue. Jinnah called a conference of the Muslim League in Lucknow on 15-18 October, 1937, to which Sikandar and his newly elected Muslim Unionist members were invited. Sikandar accepted the invitation, went to Lucknow, admitted the supremacy of Jinnah and signed agreement which is called Sikandar-Jinnah Pact. Of many clauses of the agreement, the important ones read as follows²⁶ :

- (a) That on his return to Punjab, Sir Sikanader Hayat Khan will convene a special meeting of his party and advise all Muslim members of the Muslim League already to sign the creed and join it. As such they will be subject to rules and regulations of the Central Parliamentary Board of the All-India Muslim League. This will not affect the continuance of the present coalition of the Unionist Party.
- (b) That in future elections and bye-elections for the legislature after the adoption of this arrangement, the group constituting the present Unionist Party will jointly support candidates put up by their respective groups.
- (c) That the Muslim members of the Legislature who are elected on, or accept, the League ticket, will constitute the Muslim League Party within the Legislature. It shall be open to the Muslim League Party so formed to maintain or enter into a coalition or alliance with any other party consistent with the fundamental principles of the policy and programme of the League. Such alliances may be evolved before or after the elections. The existing combination shall maintain its present name, the 'Unionist Party.'

(Contd. from last page)

22. When Mr. Jinnah came to visit Lahore to preside over the Parliamentary Board's meeting there were 8-10 men at the station to receive him. Jinnah said "The strength of your organization can be easily judged by this fact. (A. Batalavi, *Quaid-i-Azam Meri Nazar Men*, ed. S. S. Anwar, p. 46) And later with great efforts, the Panjab Muslim League leaders could arrange and audience of about 200 for a public meeting of the Quaid—in the capital of the Punjab" (*Ibid.*, p. 352).
23. A. C. Banerjee, *op. cit.*
24. One of the Muslim League members left the party and joined the Unionists soon after the elections.
25. Sikandar took ample measures to strengthen communal life. In his six-men-cabinet, he took 3 Muslims (including himself), 2 Hindus and 1 Sikh. In the matter of employment the old services formula was followed : Muslims 50%, Hindus 30%, Sikhs 20%. Besides, in that friendly atmosphere the other fictitious causes of Hindu-Muslim strife, such as cow-killing, music playing before mosque etc., became meaningless, "Islamic law as they did on such occasions. See B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan*, Bombay, 1946, pp. 259-60.
26. Vide *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. X, No. II, 1976, pp. 365-86.

As was expected, there was a great deal of noise in Punjab, especially among the staunch Muslim, Sikh and Hindu Unionists and supporters of Sikander, who were very unhappy with the pact. And so were the electorate who had just defeated Jinnah's candidates. Why did Sikander sell himself and the party to the Muslim League, they asked? The League as an organization did not exist: it could not muster, as already noted, more than 2,000 audience to listen to the Quad-i-Azam when he came in the last elections, even at a place like Lahore. In the rural areas, its existence was next to nil. Jinnah was a spent-up force after the 1937 elections: he had no government to back him, not even in the Muslim majority provinces. Who was he representing then? A half-dead League: What was his authority and his strength? Precisely, nil.

Yet Sikander went to him and signed the pact. Why? M. A. H. Ispahani, a close associate of Jinnah gives two reasons for this strange behaviour of Sikander in his book *Qaid-e-Azam as I know him*. First, 'the rise in the power of Congress, as a result of success in forming Ministries in seven out of eleven provinces of India', and its Muslim mass contact campaign in the provinces including the Punjab unnerved Sikander.' 'As an astute politician', he further adds, 'Sir Sikander realized the potential danger to his ministry. He knew that the Unionist Ministry by itself could not withstand the tide of Congress totalitarianism unless he secured the support of a Muslim organization functioning on an all-India plane.' In the second place, 'the trends of Muslim public opinion in his province; which was taking a swing in the favour of Muslim League, forced him to throw in his lot with it. Both the reasons are incorrect. Howsoever powerful the Congress or its mass contact programme might have been at the time, it could bring no harm to the Sikander Ministry in Punjab. And supposing, some miracle would have been there, than, as noted above, the lone member of the Muslim League or its half-dead Central Parliamentary Board could not have saved it. In fact, what Congress would not have been able to snatch from the League as its foe, would have been done by joining hands with the League. The Hindus and Sikhs who were supporting him whole-heartedly might have severed connection with him for being one with the League, and this would have reduced him to minority. As regards the second reason, Sikander, to quote Ispahani, was an astute politician who knew full well that the League carried no weight with the Muslim masses who had rejected it as a party in the recent polls. Nor had anything miraculous happened after the polls which could have changed the situation.²⁷ In view of this, the reasons given by Ispahani can not be accepted.

Imran Ali, an eminent Pakistani scholar, has, in a learned monograph, *Punjab Politics in the Decade Before Partition* advanced another reason for Sikander going to Lucknow. The Unionist Party was faction-ridden at that time, he says, and Sikander feared that League could overnight become a threat if a rival faction were to join it before he did.²⁸ This argument, too, does not seem to carry weight. The League at that time was a sinking ship, and not only petty rats but captains, like

27. Ispahani, *op.cit.*, pp. 50-51.

28. Imran Ali, *Punjab Politics in the Decade before Partition*, Lahore, 1975, p. 19.

Gazanfar Ali Khan, were running away from it. The factions were there in the party, no doubt, but none of them would dare to lose power and go into wilderness. Not to speak of 1937-38, but even in 1944, when Khizar fell out with Jinnah, could they think of undertaking such a risk.²⁹

What was the real reason then ? The reason was Sikander himself—his personality, his ambition and his weaknesses. The Imperialists' very 'own man', he could for their sake defy his leader (Fazli) and ditch his party³⁰ (Unionist). There is evidence to show that he had gone to Lucknow to sign the Sikander-Jinnah Pact at the bidding of the Imperialists,³¹ for the revival of dead Jinnah and his League was essential for checking the Congress and to facilitate the continuance of the *Raj* in India.³²

Any way, after capturing two provinces,³³ Jinnah took to strengthening his organization. He had known that middle classes would not help him at all—this is precisely what 1937 had proved.³⁴ So he turned towards the Muslim masses with whom he somehow had not liked to mix with earlier. He took a leaf out of Mahatma Gandhi's book and 'Muslimanized'³⁵ himself—the Western suit was replaced by a *sherwani*, *pyjama* and a Muslim cap; the prayers and congregation began to attract him,³⁶ and surprisingly, to equate himself with the Mahatma, the man who wanted to remain and 'die as plain Mr. Jinnah'³⁷ preferred to be called *Qaid-i-Azam* (a great leader, almost equivalent of the Mahatma—a great soul).

That mere talks and empty show off would not bring about the desired change—this too, Jinnah knew well. Consequently, he at once decided to change the constitution of the League, incorporating most progressive and radical elements in it. See, for example, the following part of the relevant resolution *vide* which the League decided :

- to fix working hours for factory workers and other labourers;
- to fix minimum wages;
- to improve the housing and hygienic condition of the labourers and make provision for slum clearance;

29. Even after the pact, no Muslim member of the Unionist Party formally joined the Muslim League for quite some time. There was no progress in this regard even by March 1938. See Imran Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

30. For this part of his character, see Azim Husain, *op.cit.*, pp. 270-79, 296-321.

31. See Sir Khizar's following statement : "Before proceeding to Lucknow Sir Sikander Hayat had consultations with his personal friends. Sir Henry Craik (an old Punjab civilian and a colleague of Sir Sikander in the Provincial Executive Council and now home-member, Government of India) who gave his full support to the move which would mean from Government's point of view strengthening of Mr. Jinnah's hands in Political fight against the Congress." *Autobiography*, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-71.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Punjab and Bengal.

34. See Azim Husain, *op.cit.*, pp. 302-03.

35. Earlier he had so much anglicized himself that he hated to write his full name Mohammed Ali Jinnah Bhai (later changed to Muhammed Ali Jinnah). He changed the name through a court order granted on 14 April, 1894, in London to M. A. Jinnah.

36. The *sherwani*, *pyjama* and black samur cap were put on by Jinnah for the first time at Lucknow, 15-18 October, 1937. Ispahani, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

37. See S. S. Hasan, *Plain Mr. Jinnah*, Karachi, 1976, p. 75.

- to reduce rural and urban debts and abolish usuary;
- to grant a moratorium with regard to all debts, whether decreased or otherwise, till proper legislation has been enacted;
- to secure legislation for exemption of house from attachment or sale in execution of decrees;
- to obtain security of tenure and fixation of fair rents and revenue;
- to abolish forced labour;
- to under take rural uplift work;
- to encourage cottage industries and small indigenous industries, both in rural and urban areas;
- to encourage the use of *swadeshi* articles, specially hand-woven cloth;
- to establish an industrial board for the development of industries and the prevention of exploitation by middlemen;
- to devise means for the relief of unemployment;
- to advance compulsory primary education;
- to reorganize secondary and university education, specially scientific and technical and so forth.³⁸

Besides this, the Muslim League organizational wing was strengthened, funds were collected and branches opened in almost all the districts and even in some tehsils. Sir Mohammad Iqbal was given the formal charge of the Punjab League, but the real power was vested in Sikander. Hence a great tussle which complicated matters. Imran Ali has suggested that by joining hands with the Unionists the League was 'belaboured'. I do not agree with him. The actual position was that once the official opposition was gone, the League began to flourish. Jinnah gained in stature and became so strong that he even forced Sikander to resign from the membership of the Viceroy's War Council. Sikander was unhappy with the development. And so were the Imperialist bosses who, in reaction, asked Sikander to climb down the tiger that he had mounted at their bidding. Sikander did that, but it was a little too late : at that moment Jinnah was powerful enough to ignore both Sikander and his bosses.

Meanwhile, the Congress made the second blunder : it resigned from the ministries in the seven provinces (22 October, 1936). Reading the situation correctly, Jinnah immediately relaxed his attitude towards the government and with their help he captured power in several provinces. Now Sind, the N. W. F. P., and Baluchistan were in his clutches;³⁹ Punjab and Bengal were already his. This gave a great fillip

38. It is popularly believed that the title was given by Gandhiji. But no, the title was given by Maulana Muzharuddin in his bi-weekly *Alaman* (published from Delhi) in the beginning of 1938. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Resolution No. XIV, 25th Session of the All India Muslim League, Proceedings, vide S. S. Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, pp. 325-40.

39. It may be interesting to note that provincial branches of the Muslim League were started in the N. W. F. P. in 1937; and following year in Sind; in Baluchistan it had yet to make any impact; and similar was the case with Assam. Yet, with the help of the Government, taking advantage of the Congressmen's absence (they were in jails), they formed government and gained in stature and strength. Ispahani, *op. cit.*, p. 63, commends Jinnah's decision not to join the Quit India Movement and thwart the war efforts, which led to this development.

to him who now embarked upon an ambitious plan of being a king of his own kingdom. Hence Pakistan proposal at the Lahore Session of the League on 23 March, 1940.

Sikander knew through his intelligence that a resolution demanding division of the country on the basis of the 'two nation theory' was coming at the ensuing session of the League. His views on the point were already known,⁴⁰ but it meant that he was going to draw a blank. He, therefore climbed down a little and with his friend Maqbul Ahmad proposed a resolution going half way house between his old stand and the one scheduled to be taken by the League. Sikander's resolution contained three main proposals :

- (i) Each province be a sovereign state.
- (ii) The sovereign states be vested with unlimited powers, except insofar as subjects like defence communication, foreign affairs were concerned, which were to be controlled by a central body.
- (iii) The central body would control over the subjects contained at number (ii) as an agent of the sovereign states.⁴¹

The Resolution had two advantages : it would have not harmed Sikander in Punjab, for the Unionists would have accepted it as such, no matter to what group, class or caste they belonged; and simultaneously it would have reduced the central over-domination of the Hindus, a thing the Muslims feared most.

But Sikander's Resolution as such was not passed; in its place came what is popularly known as the 'Pakistan Resolution', the most important part of which read as follows :

It is the considered view of this Session of the All-Indian Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustment as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous of sovereignty.⁴²

40. For his plan of dividing the country into seven zones in a federal system, see Sikander Hayat Khan, *Outline of a Scheme of India Federation*, Lahore, 1939.

41. See Nur Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

42. See S. S. Pirzada, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 325-40 for full text and deliberations of the Conference. There are several claimants to the Pakistan Resolution that they proposed it. First, Sir Sikander's name is there. He probably put the draft of the Resolution referred to above but his draft was changed to such an extent that it lost even its fundamental elements. Fazl-ul-Haq is the second claimant. But this is incorrect; he came to the meeting late when the Resolution was already under discussion. He only moved the Resolution. It was probably drafted by M. A. Jinnah himself; certain amendments of course did change it a little when it assumed the final form. See *Ibid.*, pp. XXII-XXV.

Professor W. C. Smith (*op. cit.*, p. 308) informs that J. C. Goatman, CIE, a Professor of Imperial Economic Relations at London, in a book published as early as 1932. *Years of Destiny, India 1926-1932* visualized the breaking up of Indian nationalism by a separate Muslim state, even suggesting a corridor from Delhi to Bengal (pp. 238 ff). Further, the
(Contd. on next page)

After a short honeymoon, the League and Unionists clashed.⁴³ Sikander opposed the Pakistan resolution.⁴⁴ and took several measures to check the League engulfing Punjab. But before he could mature his plans properly, he suddenly died on 26 December, 1942.⁴⁵

This was a great blow to the Unionists. They were left with no leader of stature at the moment, except for Sir Chhotu Ram. But he was a Hindu and despite all that he had done for the party, his election as premier at that time would have made many Unionist Muslims to leave the party. The premier had to be some Muslim.⁴⁶ But who could that man be? The two factions⁴⁷—Noon-Tiwana and Sikander-Daultana, as was expected—staked their claims. There was a great tussle, but ultimately Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana was chosen for the job. Scion of a highly reputed family, this feudal baron was a man of highest courage and had 'far more resolution than Sir Sikander.'⁴⁸ But he had his disadvantages, too, which took his scale up: he was a new comer to politics, having entered it just in 1937, and 'did not have Sikander's standing.' Nor was he 'endowed in the same degree with his diplomatic gift and charm of manner.'⁴⁹

Despite this, however, the new premier started well. But at the very outset he made a Himalayan blunder. In order to appease his rival faction, he chose Shaukat Hayat Khan, son of Sir Sikander, to be his minister. Shaukat was in Army and he immediately sought his release and plunged heart and soul into politics against Khizar. This was self-invited plague: had Khizar left Shaukat remain where he was, things would not have been so difficult for him—at least so soon.

But this was not to be. Shaukat's advent brought instability and factional feuds with Sikander-Daultana faction on one side and Noon-Tiwana on the other. The natural calamities that befell the Unionist Party had already made it weak: almost all its old guards and eminent coalition partners had died one after the other in quick succession—Ahmed Yar Khan Daultana in August 1940, Sunder Singh Majithia in April 1942, and Sikander Hayat Khan in December 1942. Surely, this was the most opportune time for the 'busy body from out side' (Jinnah) to meddle in the Punjab affairs. He rushed in and placed three proposals before Khizar in April 1944:

- (i) that every member of the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly

(Continued from last page)

minutes of the parliamentary committee meeting in London to consider the proposed federal constitution for India show the British officials trying in 1933 to press the Pakistan idea while the Indians, concerned (Muslims) could not understand why anyone would do otherwise than ignore it. See *Minutes of Evidence Given before the Joint Committee on India*.

43. *Constitutional Reform Session (1932-33)*, Vol. II, p. 1496. Craig Baxter, 'Some Aspects of Politics in the Punjab: 1936-45', in *Pakistan the Long View*, New York, 1975, p. 52.

44. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 53.

45. Ispahani, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

46. The suggestion that Muslim should be Premier was made by Sir Chhotu Ram himself.

47. For faction see C. Baxter, *op. cit.*, p. 54. The People's Party versus The Panjab Feudalists, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 3-4, (July-Oct., 1973), pp. 166-89.

48. Pendrel Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 58.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

should declare that he owes allegiance solely to the Muslim League Party in the Assembly and not to the Unionist or any other party;

- (ii) that the present label of the coalition, namely that Unionist Party, should be dropped; and
- (iii) that the name of the proposed coalition should be the Muslim League Coalition Party.⁵⁰

This meant in short Jinnah's warning to the premier : either come to my fold or perish. Khizar, toughman as he was, preferred to take the latter course. He did not accept any of the conditions put forward by Jinnah. Not only that, he insulted the Qaid by not coming to respond to his calls, and not replying to his letters, let alone obeying his commands. This infuriated Jinnah still further and on 27 April, 1944, he got Khizar expelled from the League in a huff.⁵¹ Then he planned to pull down his ministry and he fired the first shot by urging the Muslim ministers to resign. Khizar, however, proved too smart for his adversary and took initiative in his own hands; he got Shaukat dismissed before he could tender his resignation. Only two parliamentary secretaries outsmarted Khizar, and could oblige Jinnah.

The outcome was a setback to the League. Its 'efforts for a short-cut to power by an attempt to brow-beat Khizar were premature.' Clearly, 'the methods tried was by no means the wisest of political manouvers, and the weight behind it lacked sting and authority.'⁵² The effort was more probably a response to League's success in other Muslim majority provinces rather than judicious assessment of political conditions in Punjab.⁵³

Jinnah by doing what he did 'displayed lack of understanding of politics' in the Land of Five Rivers,⁵⁴ and spoiled his all-India image. Khizar's claim for the inclusion of a non-Muslim League member from the Punjab in the Viceroy's Executive Council at the Shimla Conference, 1945, was the clue of failing in the league's claim to be the sole representative of the Indian Muslims.⁵⁵ To make the matters worse, Jinnah suffered the second setback in Kashmir about this very time. But at this critical juncture the Congress came to his rescue. In the words of Sir Chhotu Ram, the strong man of Punjab who backed Khizar in 'expelling Jinnah from his Province', 'the position taken by the Congress has buttressed the position of Mr. Jinnah and has prevented the opposition against him from gathering the momentum which it would have done otherwise.' The right course for the Congress, advised the veteran Unionist, was 'to give up the policy of appeasement to Jinnah; to resume the provinces, for complete Independence could be had only as a result of India's own intrinsic strength and British good will.'⁵⁶ 'An ounce of Churchill,' he said, 'will do Congress immeasurably greater good than tons of Chamberlain.'⁵⁷

50. See Ikram Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 569.

51. *Ibid.* pp. 569-73.

52. Even in 1944 the League could not find more than 26 Muslim MLAs to back itself. See Imran Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

53. *Ibid.* p. 43.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Tika Ram, *Sir Chhotu Ram*, Hissar, 1979, p. 104.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-07.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.

His advice fell on the deaf ears of the Congress, however, and its leadership continued to look towards Jinnah for help and cooperation, ready to concede, if not all, most of his demands. This conciliatory policy of the Congress placed Jinnah in an important position by all means; and his League, too, gained in stature.

To turn to Punjab. The Punjab Muslim League had been in a bad shape until now. But after the above mentioned developments, the Muslim League put its house in order. A small but well-knit parliamentary party consisting of 23 MLAs was formed in the Assembly with Shaukat Hayat Khan as its leader. Iftikhar Husain Mamdot became president and Mumtaz Daultana general secretary of the League. Other important leaders who helped them were Raja Gazanfar Ali, Sheikh Rehmat Ali, and Sufi Abdul Hamid. The organizational wing was also taken care of: district branches were made to function, membership drive was accelerated, and huge funds were collected.⁵⁸ The propaganda wing was strengthened manifold. A new vigorous programme to contact the masses was given a concrete shape with the help of the press, posters, pamphlets, meetings, etc., in towns and in the villages. A very large number of young men from Muslim University Aligarh and progressive outfits (including the CPI) came and helped in organizing and strengthening the party a great deal on modern lines. Besides this effective affiliates, like the Muslim Students Federation, the Muslim League Guards, and the Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam were utilized in carrying the message of the Muslim League to the masses.

What was this message? What precisely did the Muslim League had to say to the people? What sort of propaganda did they do? Briefly, they took to a two-tier programme which was both negative and positive. First, the masses were frightened, wrong notions about things were put into their heads, and appeals that moved their hearts were made. And then the positive side was shown in the brightest possible colours. Pakistan, they said, was the penacea for all ills of Muslims. In that ideal state there would be no poverty, no unemployment and no exploitation by the 'Hindu blood-suckers',⁵⁹ Pakistan was a strong, living issue now.

In these critical circumstances came the elections of 1945-46. The Muslim League took the elections as a life and death question for it. If it won election in Punjab, Pakistan was a certainty, but if it lost then its dream would be shattered into hundred pieces. But this was not to happen. Anybody who had eyes could read the writing on the wall. In fact the field work done by the League had worked. The Pakistan had been sold so well to the Muslim masses that they were ready to sacrifice everything for that *bahisht* (heaven).⁶⁰

Some pertinent questions arise here: Khizar in power had a Public Relation

58. It is difficult to give exact figures of the sums collected, but these were by all estimates quite enormous. Even as early as May 1944, the League which was once very poor was in a position to give Rs. 60,000/- for salaries of workers doing its propaganda in the villages. See *India Annual Register*, 1944, Part-I, pp. 232-33; *Jat Gazette*, 10 June, 1944.

59. The Pirpur, Sharif and Haq Reports which on containing tales of untold mistries suffered by Muslim in the Congress rules provinces were circulated in every nook and corner. The people, as they had no means to verify them, accepted them with a sense of horror. If that is what the freedom means and if that is what the Congress will give us, we have nothing to do with it, was their natural reaction. For details see W. C. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-33.

60. W. C. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

Department; his party organization was there; they had workers too. In the villages, if not in towns, people still listened to them. There was no reason why the Muslim League propaganda could not have been checked by him. But they could not do it for the following reasons : First, the League was a modern outfit. As opposed to it, the Unionist Party was an old, traditional organization—an old wine in a new bottle. It could not fight a modern party. Second, at this very time (December 1945), Sir Chhotu Ram, the chief architect and master organizer, the strongest pillar of strength to the party and Khizar, died. Third, the colonialist power, which had stood by Khizar during the War, staged a somer-sault and rendered valuable help to the League, directly and indirectly. The rules that 'members of the Indian Civil service (ICS) were not to take part in any politics' were strictly enforced, except when it was the politics of the Muslim League, the ICS Muslim officers helped the cause of Pakistan in a big way.⁶¹ Fourth, the Muslim middle classes which hitherto enjoyed the Unionist patronage also changed like-wise. For 'the Muslim bourgeoisie and the Hindu bourgeoisie are competitive and they cannot both own the banks and industries, run the commerce, do the professional and other jobs in one capitalist state.'⁶² Lastly, the Muslim League educated the masses, and made them realize that their future lay safe not in free Hindu India but in free Muslim Pakistan.⁶³

As a result of all these things, the Unionist Party lost its elan. There were large scale desertions from its ranks. Many towering leaders left their old party to join the League. No doubt the new comers gave a boost to the League, but as we shall see later, they proved to be a permanent plague to the League and Pakistan.

IV

Meantime, the 1946 elections came. All the parties did their best to capture power. But the Muslim League outwitted them all in the race. Of the 86 seats designated for Muslim (including urban, rural, and women), the League won 73, while the Unionist won only eleven (all rural), two seats going to the independents. In vote terms, the League got 66.4 per cent of votes and the Unionist, who only contested the rural seats, got 26.7 per cent. In terms of seats, the over-all position was as given in Table 3.

Table 3
PARTYWISE POSITION IN THE PLA, 1946

<i>Party</i>	<i>No. of seats won</i>
Muslim League	73
Congress	51
Akalis	21
Unionists	11
Independents	19
Total	175

61. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

63. *Ibid.*, 330.

The rout of the Unionists was not only the rout of the nationalist forces but it also paved the way for partition. Understandably, Jinnah was mighty pleased and he sent a congratulatory message to Nawab of Mamdot, the President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, styling Punjab as 'the foundation stone of Pakistan'. Here a question may be asked : Was the Qaid being superfluous as one usually becomes on such occasions, lavishing such extravagant praise on the Punjab and the Muslim Leaguers ? Or did he seriously mean what he said ? Was Punjab really a crux, as believed by many, of the Pakistan scheme ? Could there have been no Pakistan without Punjab ? Was the Land of the Five Rivers, as pointed out by Jinnah, really the 'bed rock' of Pakistan ? Fortunately, we are in a position to say something about these and other such questions. If the population of the Muslims in India would have been distributed equally, not concentrated in any one region, then the demand for separate Pakistan would not have been raised at all, for the soul of Pakistan needed a physical body to come into existence. Because there was high concentration of Muslims in the western and eastern parts of the country, they provided a two-part physical body for Pakistan. Between these two parts, the western part was by all means more important, for it was better placed in strategic, economic and political terms. And when we proceed further, in the western sector, Punjab came to occupy a pride of place for these very reasons. If the Land of the Five Rivers would not have been available, the N. W. F. R., Sind and even Baluchistan would not have been ready to go for Pakistan. In the eastern sector, some second thought about partition had already started gripping people's mind. And this way, Punjab's role was of immense importance in the scheme of Pakistan.

V

The long and short of our story is that Pakistan was Punjab's doing. But this is not the whole truth. The whole truth is that no doubt Pakistan was Punjab's doing, but it was also Pakistan's undoing. Discredit for whatever has gone wrong in Pakistan in different aspects of life since its inception, like weakening of democratic roots, economic chaos, and social disruption goes in the main to Punjab. Let me elaborate the point. As a main creator of Pakistan, Punjab occupied a pride of place there. The Punjab Muslim League controlled and guided the affairs not only of Punjab but of entire Pakistan. And as the reality was, the league was not fit to do the job. For, as noted above, it had, for a temporary gain, admitted the deserters of the Unionist Party in late 1940s on a pretty big scale. As a result, a modern outfit (league) was metamorphosed into a traditional party—the true self of the old *avatar* of the Unionist Party. The moment this traditional party was entrusted with the responsibility to handle the affairs of a modern state, it failed and collapsed under its own weight. The military took its place, giving Pakistan a long spell of its dictatorial regimes.

It is indeed a sad story. But fortunately, it had, like most of such stories, a useful more, especially for those who care to read their histories a shade care-fully, that those who do not move with time and change, too, in line with its requirement are fated to be pushed to the periphery and become irrelevant.

SANDAL BAR MEMOIRS OF A PUNJABI FARMER

DARSHAN S. TATLA¹

This interview with Pritam Singh Grewal—a Jat Sikh farmer of Gagra, tahsil Jagraon, district Ludhiana forms part of five interviews with farmers who migrated to Canal Colonies in the early part of this century and then were forced to return as refugees as a consequence of the partition of the province in 1947. The development of canal colonies under the British rule was a unique experiment in agrarian planning which resulted in the migration of thousand of Sikh farmers from central districts to western areas of the Punjab, popularly known as bar. Interview was conducted in an open format asking many questions relating to their experiences. One of this interview is reproduced keeping it as close as possible to human voice spoken by the farmer.²

Q : When did you settle in the bar ?

A : I was born in the Canal Colonies in 1927. It was my grandfather, Sardar Shiam Singh, who had migrated to the bar area.³ As a child, I was told by many

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2. This is not the right place to lament the lack of oral evidence on the Punjab partition. There is simply no tradition of collection of oral literature in Punjab universities. Academics have simply neglected the human dimension of the partition and other events in Punjab history. Experiences of farmers who migrated to canal colonies remain undocumented. A few scattered pieces include, see for example : Robert S. Corruccini and Samvit S. Kaul, *Halla; Demographic consequences of the partition of the Punjab, 1947* [Lanham, University Press of Meerica, 1990]. It gives some extracts from refugee' memories. Similarly, Miriam Sharma and u. Vanjani, 'Remembrances of things past : partition experiences of Punjabi villagers in Rajasthan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 4, 1990, pp. 1728-35 discuss experiences of Punjabi farmers who migrated from Multan and settled in Karnal and then were given land in Alwar district of Rajasthan. Thus, Oral literature on the partition is virtually non-existent except for a valuable recent publication in 1995, see, *Yadan Ganji bar dian* [memories of Ganji Bar], Patiala : Punjabi University, 1995. Written by Harkirat Singh—a retired don at the university, Ganji bar was part of nili bar spanning Beas and Rabi on the south side and it covered Montgomery [now called Sahiwal] and Multan districts. Among literary works on the partition, some autobiographical sketches and fictions exist in Punjabi, Urdu and English. A number of novels and short stories in Punjabi and Urdu literature narrate the communal carnage and brutality faced by refugees as a consequence of the partition.
3. I have changed the real name of the leading person slightly to conform to standard anthropological practice. All other events are faithfully produced from the tape. The interviews were conducted in Punjabi language during May-June 1996.

people that my grandfather had originally migrated to Lyallpur colonies in 1892 or 1893. He must be about 26/27 years old then.⁴

Q : What was your ancestral village ? How did he hear about Canal Colonies?

A : Our family belonged to Dhandhra, a village in Ludhiana district not far from the town itself. My grandfather's name was Sardar Shiam Singh. As most people know, in the western Punjab, there were vast tracts of land which were all jungle and uninhabited, indeed seemed uninhabitable.⁵ But when the English rulers decided to develop these areas into farming lands, they prepared a grand plan to bring water to these regions by constructing new canals through it. They also prepared map for a new city of Lyallpur, and marked the areas where the farmers will have houses in the new villages. When all this planning was completed, and canals dug out, and water was ready for farms, they held numerous meetings in many districts of Punjab, especially Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar persuading farmers to buy land in the new regions—which were called *bars*. Through extensive publicity, the *sirkar* announced that land is ready for acquisition, and is cheap. As a result many peasants, like my grandfather decided to try his luck in the new regions. Of course some were frightened of consequences, or had not the courage to re-settle in far place.

Q : How did your grandfather decide to migrate to the Canal Colonies in the Sandal Bar ?

A : Like all peasants, my grandfather must have been looking for more and

4. The development of Canal Colonies can be seen from the following table taken from Imran Ali's, *Punjab under Imperialism*, p. 9 :

Canal Colonies in the Punjab

Name of Colony	Period of Colonisation	Where Doab	Districts	Name of Canal Work	Cost [Rs 000]
Sidhnai	1886-1888	Bari	Multan	Sidhnai	1301
Sohag Para	1886-1888	Bari	Montgomery	Lower Sohag Para	1803
Chunian	1896-98	Bari	Lahore	Upper Bari Doab	*
Chenab	1892-1905 1926-1930	Rechna	Gujranwala Jhang Lyallpur Sheikhupura	Lower Chenab	53,072
Jhelum	1902-1906	Jech	Shahpur Jhang	Lower Jhelum	43,613
Lower Bari Doab	1914-1919	Bari	Montgomery Multan	Lower Bari Doab	25,086
Upper Chenab	1915-1919	Rechna	Gujranwala Sialkot Sheikhupura	Upper Chenab	43,596
Upper Jhelum	1916-1921	Jech	Gujrat	Upper Jhelum	49,770
Nili Bar	1926-	Bari	Montgomery Multan	Sutlej Valley Project	83,787

*Not completed by 1940s.

5. The word bar means uninhabited jungle area—certainly so in Multani Punjabi. In Guru Nanak's *barhmah*, composition he uses the term as '*Chet basani bhala behavar suhavrhe, ban foole manjh bar main pir ghar bahurhe*', there bar clearly refers to jungle.

better land. But as ours was a large family, my grandfather had two other brothers, Khem Singh—who was in the army and Prem Singh. Khem Singh being a soldier could not apply or qualify for the land so Shiam Singh and Prem Singh applied for one *murabba*—which was minimum unit of land in the *bars* [25 acres of land]⁶. As there was a lot of propaganda regarding the new lands and the government officials were persuading farmers to go to the *bars*, peasants were keen to till productive lands. So many farmers decided to experiment with the new life there.⁷ Moreover in Dhandhra, like most other villages in the Punjab at that time, farms were not very productive as these lacked water facility. I was told that when the Sahib [English administrator] came from Ludhiana to our villages, a drummer went through the village asking people to gather at the canal bungalow. The Sahib had arrived to allocate the *bar* land to prospective farmers. Our local *zaildar* was in the crowd. The Sahib asked him if he would like to have *murabbas* in the *bars*. The *Zaildar* said, he already owns sufficient land, 'we cannot manage this land, how can we control new extra land in the far away district'. It was commonly known that when the *zaildar* went home, his mother asked him why he was so late. The *zaildar* told her mother, that he had difficult job of refusing *Sahib's* offer of ten *murabbas* in the *bar* and the *sahib* had told him, 'one day you will regret this decision'. *Zaildar's* mother agreed with the *sahib's* observation but could not tell his son to migrate. The point is that English administrators were keen to take good peasants to the *bars* by offering generous terms in allocating new land and there was wide publicity about the new lands available.

Q : Who went with your grandfather ?

A : Almost all the leading farmers of our village. The Dhandra village was allocated some 50 *murabbas*. Among my close kin, who migrated were Deva Singh, Seva singh, Nadan Singh, *zaildar* Bakhtaura singh and several others. Our new village in the *bar* was called Chak No. 74. Farmers from Dhandhra had also settled in two other villages in the *bar*, Chak no. 66 and Chak no. 46. The latter village had some migrants from Majha region also. Similarly, Chak no. 91, 92, 93, 94 belonged to villagers from Mullanpur in Ludhiana district.

Q : Where was your Chak and which canal irrigated the area ?

A : Our Chak No. 74, was in Lyallpur district⁸. All villages in the *bars* had

6. *Murabba* referred to 25 acres of land in common parlance of farmers. However, the colonial land was divided strictly as squares and rectangles, which was equivalent to 27.7 acres. Peasants [*abadkars*] were allotted half a square to 2 squares, yeoman [*sufedposh*] two to five squares, while capitalists [*rais*] grants consisted of six to twenty squares.
7. On the manner of selection of peasant grantees, see 'note for selection of colonists for Jhang and Bhowana Branches' by *Chenab Colony Manual*, n.d., Board of revenue, 74, Vol III, pp. 957-60. For lists of applicants for the larger grants, their caste and area of origin, their landholdings and capital and final outcome of the applications, see, 'Applications for Yeoman grants on Chenab Canal', BOR J/301/382; and capitalist applications for land on chenab canal-Gugera and Buralla Branches', BOR J/301/650.
8. Lyallpur district [now called Faisalabad] was in Sandal bar-spanning parts of Shaikhupura district and Jhang. This bar was between Ravi and Chenab rivers, called Rechna Doab, lying in the south. Lyallpur was the most prominent colony for Jat Sikh settlers from central districts. Lyallpur was a new district formed in 1904 of portions of Jhang, Multan, and Montgomery districts. It had four Tahsils, Samundri, Lyallpur, Toba Tek Singh and Jaranwala.

number only, but new residents of these villages renamed them on the old pattern. Thus our Chak was called Bhola Singhwala, sometimes also known as Thikriwala. It was about 160 miles from Lahore and just 12 miles from Lyallpur on the road leading to Jhang. The Jhang Branch of the Lower Bari Doab Canal originating from the Chenab river irrigated our area.

Q : Were army men allocated *murabbas* ?

A : Not in Chak 74. They were settled in Samundri Tahsil—army men were exclusively allocated lands in this new Tahsil. Army men from such villages as Mallha, Rasulpur and other Ludhiana villages thus migrated into this area of the bar.

Q : How did your father went to that bar village ?

A : Well, my grandfather was already in the bar. My father must have accompanied him when he was quite toddler, certainly from 10 years onwards. I was born there. Of my age were Tarlok Singh, Joginder Singh, Jeon Singh who were either born there or migrated there quite young. We all contributed to family farming. Sadly, my father died in his prime youth, leaving us, two brothers, when we were only ten and twelve years old. Our mother and grandfather then brought us up.

Q : How did the initial allotment look like ?

A : I only heard this from my grandfather. Our grandfather arrived in the bar with a small map of the land allocated to our family, the local officials had instructed my grandfather by marking the land on the paper. Our grandfather marched down to the land after the long train trip to Lyallpur, this new railway line which was just laid out before allocation of land in this region. He had his son [my father] on his shoulders, and some essential supplies were being carried by his brother and others. On the first trip, they also took ploughs, animals, buffaloes, bullocks, cart and hand-driven *chaki* as essential items. However, as they reached the bar, they were very disappointed with the first look of the land. There was no *abadi*. The land was all *barani* and of course just like a jungle with lot of dense trees and moth growth everywhere. No village was in sight, as there was no settlement yet. But they could not return after investing all their money and energies in acquiring this land. They set out to weed all the growth. Obviously, intensive hard labour was required initially to remove the unwanted bushes out of way and then level the land by ploughing several times. As the land was cleared and parts of it cultivated, it started yielding results. Women were called on the second trip to the bar. They provided essential support and made the jungle into a home by putting hearth and furnace. Of course, as women came, the new village which was a pencil-plan on paper yet handed down by Sahibs to lower officials, started to become a reality. Initially the housing plot was barricaded then gradually house was built.

You see before the arrival of my grandfather, the canal was already there, with a number of small streams taken from the canal cut through the area taking water to lands, with *moghas* [watercourse outlets] at every two or three *murabbas*. This was all pre-planned, before farmers went there. Water was ready to flow to their individual fields. Farmers were very impressed by such high level planning. But there were no sign of a village or community life at that time.

Q : How will you describe your bar village ?

A : Our new village Chak no. 74 had about fifty *murabbas* of land. All these *murabbas* were allocated to farmers from Dhandra village alone. Our new village had only 4/5 *murabbas* of surplus land. Our elders who settled there, were anxious that non-Dhandhra villagers should not mix, hence elders encouraged some families to buy an extra *murabba* especially those with promising lads. In this way, three or four families bought an extra *murabba*. In this way our village consisted of all the families of Dhandra, only exception was a lone family from another village Sudhar, this family was very good and well tolerated by others.

Q : What was the composition of other neighbouring villages ?

A : Our neighbouring villages were also 'pure', each chack drew settlement from just a single village from the old districts. Such was the case of settlers from Jodhan and Mansuran. Both villages had exclusive allocation in the bar neighbouring our Chak.

Q : But most villages were of mixed population originating from various districts and villages ?

A : Most Chaks were mixed, but ours was pure. We had many advantage over mixed ones : we knew each others' past, this worked well for the village cohesion, our village never had the kind of disputes over the allocation of water, for example, many other villages usually had and often.

Q : What was soil like initially ?

A : The whole of the bar looked like a dense jungle. With all sorts of bushes, undergrowth there was hardly anything plain and uncovered. In fact, to farmers' surprise small pieces of land which were relatively free of bushes were not so fertile. Thus the barren land did not require as much labour, ultimately that proved to be disappointment. Area covered by dense growth paid dividends on intensive labour in terms of high productivity.

Q : What was the amount of government levy ? How much you paid for the *murabba* originally ?

A : I don't remember how much was paid for the *murabba* by my grandfather. I think it was initially given on rent only with the provision to gain proprietary rights later.⁹ Annual government levy in my time varied from Rs 200 to 250 per *murabba*.

Q : What were tools of farming ?

A : Bullocks were the mainstay for ploughing, some farmers also used camels for transportation. We also kept domestic animals like buffaloes and goats for milk.

Q : What were the popular crops you sowed ?

A : There were two major seasons and the pattern for each was fixed. The *kharif* season was for cotton, or *desi kapah*, the *rabi* season was mainly wheat. The *murabba* was roughly divided into two halves. The cotton was sown in one

9. At first land was given on lease and the government charged rent. However, as a result of 1907 peasant agitation, government converted tenancy rights into proprietary rights by 1912 legislation. See details in Imran Ali's *The Punjab under Imperialism: 1885-1947*, Princeton University Press, 1988. Also see N. G. Barrier, 'The Punjab disturbances of 1907 : the response of the British Government in India to agrarian unrest', *Modern Asian Studies*, 1[4], 1967. 353-383.

half, the other half was kept for wheat. Half the land was kept free of crops for want of water and of course conserving productivity.

Q : How was canal water managed ?

A : All crops depended upon the canal water. There were no tubewells or persian wells or hand-pumps. The canal water came through streams with *moghas*, the latter were water outlets carrying water 24 hours a day to various farms. Water was rationed by time. Each farm was given certain hours of water, our *murabba* was allocated 12 hours of water per week. We had a further turn of 10 hours of water every ten days. Elders had taken great pains over water management to sort out the most equitable system for water distribution to avoid any disputes over water—the most precious resource. While water pressure was monitored carefully, it was the duty of current water owner to report any changes in water pressure, this was compensated by allowing more hours to them. Similarly dry days were also carefully noted and taken into consideration for allocation hours. For example if water pressure became half of the normal, water hours were doubled [so a 12 hour allocation became 24 hours for a particular farm]. There were permanent marks at many points on *moghas*, to monitor changes in water pressure in streams and also the Canal. Village elders were quick to decide about the changed schedule of water for each farm.

Q : Were disputes over water quite frequent ?

A : Not in our village. Some differences would arise often, but these were resolved amicably. There was never such a dispute which led to violence, as happened in some other villages. But arguments over water were frequent, as you can imagine how Jats' temper can rise suddenly and they can create fuss over nothing, and then heads can roll in their disputes.

Q : Did you experiment with new varieties of crops ?

A : Nothing much beyond wheat and cotton. For cotton we used something called LS variety. It gave a nice crop and yield was higher than traditional cotton. The Department also gave encouragement to this new variety.

Q : Who were these people from the Department ?

A : These were from the Government's agriculture department. In later period, University personnel at Lyallpur was interested in what we were doing, some of their officials would visit us occasionally. For wheat, we all used the traditional variety seeds. New varieties for wheat came only after the partition.

Q : What was the output of crops and incomes ?

A : About 15-20, maunds for wheat per acre and about 20 maunds for cotton was considered a good crop. Well, we sold wheat for Rs. 1.5 to 2 per maund. Cotton used to sell between Rs 3-4 per maund.¹⁰

10. 'Lyallpur colony is the richest tract in India perhaps even in Asia', so claimed M. L. Darling, in his *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* [London : Oxford University Press, 1947] p. 132. Similar views were expressed by C. H. Calvert who wrote, 'nowhere in the world up to 1920 was there to be found so large a body of cultivators, so prosperous in proportion to the requirements of their lives, as the colonists of the Lower Chenab Canal'. See *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab*, [Lahore : Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1936], p. 22.

Q : Did some people try other crops ? Fruit Crops ?

A : Only exception to this uniform pattern was in the 1940s. A village near us, Lil, had some farmers who experimented with vine fruits. This was mainly due to the water incentive, a garden got double water than the normal crop. Their example was followed by others, but the partition soon followed and experiment ended without yielding any results. A few farmers from nearby villages reared horses, for which they received extra allowances.

Q : Was water in short supply as in some areas of other colonies ?

A : No, not in our colony. Near us, some villages had drinking water problems. There the underground water was very sour. We had some relatives in Isrhu village, where this was a problem. They had to dig a large pool with smaller pools to clean canal water for drinking. They had to use canal water for everything. In fact, all along the road to Jhang, water was not suitable for drinking. Along the road, one came across many small pools for cleaning water.

Q : What happened to people who used to live in the bar areas before your settlement?

A : They were called *Junglis*—a semi-nomadic tribe. I don't think they were Muslims. They had lived in the Jhang area. Near us, they had concentrated at Awampur station. Gradually they were interspersed within some villages, but their population was sparse. They gave us no problems, their main occupation was grazing cattle. However as their lands squeezed, occasionally some of them would steal our animals. They also did some farming but were quite primitive in their methods. We had no social relations with them.

Q : How was transport like then?

A : Transport was by train or by foot. There was brick built road joining Lahore with Lyallpur, this passed through our villages. But before the bar settlement, there were no roads, only foot-trodden lanes through the jungle. Our village *granthi* used to tell of marked passages through the *jungle* which was used by a saintly person, Nand Singh while visiting another famous saint—a holy man of Jhang. Canals changed all that.

Q : Give an outline of the village, its houses and the nearest city?

A : In the bar, all villages were planned. They all had a well at its centre. This was dug up by the new settlers. There were usually four lanes cross-cutting each other, each such lane had places for 6 houses on either side. Thus village was like a square cut through by a number of streets each leading to the village centre. It was a simple and elegant plan. Farmers made their own houses, all were allocated certain area in a street. Houses were all mud-houses but these were constructed to a planned structure outlined by the English administrators.

Lyallpur city was worth a visit then; it had eight bazaars, two internal ones were almost circular in which you could walk through anyone of them to reach the city centre. We used to call it *Gol* [circular] bazaar.

Q : What was social groups like in the village, its *pattis* and what were dwellings like?

A : As the village was constructed by the allottees, a particular street started

resembling the old pattern of Punjab villages. For example, our village had three main *pattis*, ours was called *Kharkian*, another was *Bhola Singh di patti* and third was known as *Mahilan valian di patti* [this was presumably because these people had two storey houses in their older villages].

We kept buffaloes, bullocks; some households had a camel also. Women used to look after the household and cook, there was plenty of milk; practice of selling milk was completely alien.

Q : How about other social castes than Jats?

A : Others followed the settlers, *chumar*, *nai*, *jhiwar* and others. From our village Dhandhra a number of such people migrated to support Jats and adopted their professions. Our village eventually also had one lane of Muslims who became labourers. All menials of the village, *nai*, *bhrai*, *laagi* were there. The Sirkar had allocated land for such persons, thus, a *pucca laagi* was given half acre of land. Not only that, half an hour of water also. However, later on, the Sirkar took this land back and land was sold to highest bidder.

Q : How about shopkeepers?

A : The *bania* also came along. Every village had allotment for shops just beside the central well. The allotment was about 30 *marlas* for shops. Our village shopkeeper was someone called Goda. He was unusually clean and quietly going about his business; never borrowing anything from neighbours. He kept an unusual range of goods, from the usual foodstuffs, animal feed and even paints, and farming instruments and utensils. Most common item was animal feed *khal varheven* at Rs 1.5 per maund. He was also rather firm in dealings, never allowing much credit. Later on there was another big shop opened by one of our old village folks. They kept all things for construction and also many of steel things. Our village became quite a shopping centre for the neighbouring villages, people would come to our shops rather than go to Lyallpur. Moreover the road leading to Jhang helped in this trade. Villagers from Jodhan and Mansuran especially came this way.

Q : How the village managed itself?

A : There were no *panchyats* in those times. These came later after the partition. The village head was *Lumbardar* usually chosen from the leading men of village. Our village had three of them. They decided on all matters crucial to village welfare and mediated in all disputes.

Q : What was governmental patronage to *Lumbardars*?

A : They were given half a *murabba* free. Besides they had to have a mare—a strong and fit animal—which was periodically mated with a donkey and the resulting sibling *khachra* was given to the Sirkar. The Sirkar needed these *khachras* for their army regiments. Some families kept horses, but these were quite expensive. Some Janglis kept wild horses. Amar Singh in our village kept horses, he was very fond of horses and his household was also full of dogs.

Q : How did you resolve any disputes in the village?

A : Our village was very Brahmin-like. I do not remember even a single dispute which took a violent turn. Village elders decided all minor disputes as they arose and their decision was usually accepted by all. We never took a dispute to the

Sahib who used to visit at the Canal Bungalow to hear such disputes from neighbouring villages.

Q : How was your relationship with the village you left behind?

A : We still had land in Dhandhra. So we used to return to Dhandhra periodically. We had leased our land to Khem Singh—one of our relatives who, used to pay us a bit, you see, the *mamla* or *batai* did not amount too much in those days. I remember, another villager Puran Singh with a *murabba* in Dhandhra, his income never exceeded Rs 200 a year. Our land amounted to 50 bighas at Dhandhra [10 acres], so we did not expect much income from back home. In any case, we visited old village every six months but definitely once a year. The usual stay was for a month occasionally for two months then return to the bar village. Travel was by train from Lyallpur to Ludhiana, it took eight hours, then walk down to the village on either end.

Q : How was your quest for more land in the bar? how you compared your life in the bar?

A : We managed to buy another *murabba* in the bar, thus we had two *murabbas* between four brothers. The second piece of land was bought for Rs. 10, 000. Compared to the Bar colony, crops were poor in Dhandhra. Water was simply not available in Dhandhra. Although in the bar colony, we used to till only half the land for one crop, keeping the other for the next crop, still income was substantial than Dhandhra. However, one must not compare these days with those. Things were simple then. Once we were riding our cart back from Lyallpur after selling the cotton. Our *sanjhi* quipped to settle our income, saying you had 60 maunds of cotton, sold at Rs 4 per maund. That's total income of Rs 240, hence each brother gets Rs 60. None had seen a 100 rupee currency note then.

Q : Where was crop sold?

A : Lyallpur was a major market for farm products. Some villages had middlemen, *arhtias*; who were licensed by the Sirkar. This middleman, would usually buy all the cotton then negotiate with big traders from the city. During the wheat season, he would buy wheat put it into bags and pay the farmers. Then he would sell this produce to visiting traders. We saw wheat leaving the village on camels and the cotton on carts. Many dozens of camel driven carts left together for the city. Each camel could carry 3 to 4 bags of wheat. Some households kept camels and carts for hire, they would ply their carts as far as Lyallpur to Lahore, some went as far as Ludhiana or other cities.

Q : How was social and religious life in the village? How were particular days and ceremonies observed?

A : Many bar villages built spacious and elegant gurdwaras. Our village gurdwara was constructed at the initiative of Lumbrdars. Each farmer contributed according to their landholding. Bricks were transported from Lyallpur. The gurdwara was built with steel girders and pucca walls, its central hall measured 30 feet by 40 feet. All important anniversaries relating to the Gurus were celebrated, so were *sangrand* and *massiya*. Some people sang hymns with the harmonium, *dholki* [drum], *chhaine*. Our village leaders sang *Asa di var* on important occasions. Later,

the village afforded a regular *granthi* who migrated from Jangpur. His name was Harnam Singh—a very pious and devoted man. His family after partition settled very well. Occasionally, some bards and singers would visit the gurdwara. There was much colour and gaiety in the village on Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind's birthdays. Similarly *nimani*, *ikadshi* days were celebrated with much colour and ceremony.

Q : Did any political leader visit the village?

A : I cannot remember any. Giani Kartar Singh is the only one I can recall. He stood for assembly elections from our area, as an Akali candidate against a Congressite Sikh. He was supported by an old veteran Chhanga Singh [grandfather of Jagdev Singh—a contemporary Sikh leader in Ludhiana district]. We heard many jokes about Giani's family, among these that his father was a loutish character. That Giani's father was originally from Jalandhar district and did not possess half a *murabba* to be eligible for vote or standing as a candidate. No one had a vote unless they owned half a *murabba*. It was said that Chhanga Singh donated half a *murabba* to Kartar Singh to enable him to contest the election. Kartar Singh won the election.

Q : Any other political event you remember?

A : Like other peasants, I had little interest in politics. As with other youths, all I did was ploughing the land in the morning and sitting idle in the evening. Heavyweights in the village were Zaildars and Lumbardars. They would never speak against the Sirkar. Our village Zaildar, Bakhtaur Singh had inherited Zaildari after Jodhan's Zaildar died at 66 Chak. As a Zaildar, he was well-known and respected figure in neighbouring villages. He was always in the know-how of political developments and matters relating to the Sirkar.

Q : How about marriages and other social rites?

A : After settlements in the colony, many relationships developed in those villages. People were engaged and married across the local villages in the bar. Then the marriage party stayed for full three days with many customs and ceremonies now extinct. No one who died in the colony was brought back to the original villages. They were put on fire pyres there with last rites read by the village *granthi* followed by religious ceremonies.

Q : How much was water levy? Was collection strict?

A : It depended on the area and water used. The *Patwari* used to assess each crop's liability, presented this assessment to the Lumbardar who was responsible for collecting land revenue at the end of each season. Our levy was less than Rs 200 per annum. It wasn't much. Payment was flexible, often paid late without rigorous enforcement. If crop was not good, assessment was delayed and reduced.

Q : How did the village youth spend their spare time in the evening?

A : There was much leisurely activity in the village centre. There were facilities for weight lifting, wrestling, jumping and playing *kabaddi*. Many kinds of games and exercises were available for those interested. In winter, many games were held including a popular game of bullock-cart races and wrestling. The village had a licensed liquor shop. The village had a hospital, a police station and there was a

Canal bungalow nearby. Milk and *ghee* was plentiful. Tea was something new, only one or two households started drinking tea usually once a day. Our liquor shop was managed by Bhanga Singh, [a grandfather of Gurcharan Singh of Galib, an MP from Ludhiana, 1992-1996] Galib family belonged to Zaildars, settled in 80 Chak, they owned 12 *murabbas*. They had first settled in Jodhan then migrated to 80 Chak Dhaipi.

Q : How were children educated?

A : The village had a primary school. There were four teachers, for about 80-90 pupils. The nearest high school was in Dhaipi at Chak 48 some four miles away. A number of students passed the matriculation examination. By the 1940s, our village was campaigning for a high school, the land was already donated by a family for the site, with addition from village's common land. The Sirkar sanctioned a high school in 1940.

Q : How much was village common land and how was it used?

A : Two *murabbas* were village common land, this was mainly used for animal grazing. But as this land was far away, there were complicated negotiations to transfer it to near the village. This was only allowed after several years of petitions and appeals to the Sahib and local officials.

Q : Did you hear of an agitation relating to land levy in Lyallpur in which Ajit Singh and Lala lajpat Rai took part?

A : Yes, elders and grandfather used to tell us how Congress-walas instigated this agitation. There were processions and petitions in Lyallpur colonies. Leaders argued that the Sirkar has provided canals, but they already got their money worth on these canals. Why are farmers still being charged for water? We should not pay any land revenue. In our village Harbhajan Singh, with six sons, was always knowledgeable in such matters. As a sort of *nihang*, he would drink well water using only steel utensils for eating as a strictly religious man. He was arrested in that agitation, he used to narrate how he spent six months in prison. He was always eager to tell anyone who cared to listen, that Sirkar is not dealing fairly with the farmers.

Q : Did the First or Second World Wars affect the village in any way? How did you know the outside world?

A : We heard about wars, but nothing changed. Nearby villages where army men had settled, were quite affected. There was no newspaper in the village, no radio and no other communication channel. Only in 1947 we saw a radio for the first time. This was when a number of us went up to the Canal bungalow—this had a radio, to hear important news on 15 August's night. We reached in the evening and stayed to hear the 8 PM news. This radio announced that Hindustan has become free and the country will be divided into Pakistan. This was the first time some 10-12 of us saw and heard a radio.

Q : And the return? When it became inevitable?

A : Our family lived in the bar village for 55 years. When these news and rumours started about Pakistan. We were told moving was necessary. But many people thought it is all nonsense. We should not move. After all, there will be

another government in this area, who will only demand revenue and we will pay it. What else government is to do with us? There is government on the other side, a new one will be on this side. So what difference does it make, if there are going to be two governments? Such arguments took place daily in our village. Then suddenly everything changed when murders came along. Some Sikh leaders ran through our villages, including Giani Kartar Singh and Udham Singh Nagoke. They told us to get ready for permanent movement back to native lands. There were many meetings in those days. Our doubts about leaving were set aside when the first batch of Muslims appeared near our village who had migrated from the other side of the border. Then came the announcement that we should all pack by such a date and put all our belongings by the road.

Panic struck in. Imagine all our house full of things, animals, our land, crops and relatives, how could one leave all that in a day? But we were told about the arrangement; we were to join the Sargodha *kafla*—which was expected to arrive at our village the next day. However, as Sargodha *kafla* reached the city, some Muslims stopped them by closing the railway gate. This was a prelude to Muslim invasion on Sikh refugees, the fighting ensued and hundreds were left dead. During the fighting, people used hand made weapons, *kirpans*, *barchhas*, *nezas*, rifles and bombs. As soon the news came of this massacre, our village youth got busy making all sorts of fighting weapons and loaded them on to our carts. The village carpenter who had extinguished fire in his small factory, was asked to ignite the fire and many youth spent the late night sharpening many *barchhas* and melted other instruments of combat. There were talks of Akali *Jathas* but nothing came of it.

The Sargodha *kafla* was taken to Lyallpur Khalsa College for the night stay after their encounter with Muslims. They spent the night nursing and counting their dead and the injured. They were attended by a number of Akali workers and student volunteers. During the same night, Giani Kartar Singh and other leaders sent message to all villages around Lyallpur not to leave any village until informed by a well-recognised Sikh. There were many rumours around. So we went back to the village house packing more things on our carts. By this time villagers of Mansuran, Jodhan, Dhaipi and others were also sitting on the roadside ready to join the refugee exodus. By now the queue of refugees extended for many miles from Bulloki Headwork downwards.¹¹ Then came heavy rains. It washed away many carts, hundreds of bullocks died. The government flew a helicopter to drop food from the air. There was a long stop here, in fact, it took 20 days to start. This led to shortage of everything, many people were in dire circumstances, bulls were starving, people exhausted.

Our family had four carts, on one was loaded a *sandook*, packed with many things including our food. Another cart carried *toorhi*—animal feed. Luckily, we had sent all our children and young women earlier with the army trucks. You see, we had some relatives in the army. They had passed through our village while trying to rescue Jhang's population, mostly Bhapas and Arora Sikh and Hindus. They had

11. Bulloki, in Lahore district was Major headwork, the Lower Bari Doab Canal originated from here.

advised us to get all our women and children on the road by the following day. Thus we were spared the worst scenes of massacre as our women and children were safely transported to the border.

During the stoppage of 20 days, our *kafla* was looted by Muslims at several spots. A gang of Muslims would run through a part of the refugees at night under the cover of darkness. We were quite vulnerable. Although youth took turns to defend particular patches of carts and defended road blocks. One day as we went to get animal feed from a distant village where we knew someone's crops, we were set upon by a gang of Muslims on our way back. We fought back by making a lot of noise and escaped unhurt but were very frightened by the sudden ambush. After 20 days, the *kafla* moved. People had abandoned many valuables by then, as the order came to move. Many bullocks had no strength to move carts, so many carts were abandoned, these were promptly burnt by the accompanying army men rather than fall into the hands of Muslims. The first night was again spent at Lyallpur's Khalsa College. Next day we set early in the morning. Our *kafla* became 10 miles long. Eventually we crossed the border by Khemkaran side. As we crossed the border, expressions of happiness, confusion, mixed along with keen discussion about the new border. Where was Hindustan and how did Pakistan begin from this border? We argued with each other, locating many towns and villages across. We stayed the night just near the new border. Here almost everyone was afflicted by cholera which soon spread like an epidemic. As a result, hundreds of refugees died. Death smelt all around camps. Our village lost five persons. All around, one heard cries and burning of the dead. As we set out further east, our relatives were waiting on the road. They told us we should be going to a new village, Gagra near Jagraon. We left the *kafla* at Khemkaran and spent a night at Mahaun where some of our villagers had settled temporarily. Next morning we set out to Gagra.

Q : Why choose Gagra?

A : We did not wish settle in Dhandhra as we had little land there. As Dhandhra's Muslim population was almost none, so there wasn't much surplus land available. Moreover, our relatives had got a piece of land there by the time we returned. All refugees were given 12 acres irrespective of land they had in the bar. This was to quickly settle the incoming refugees. The permanent settlement was to taken place years later. My brother had arrived ahead to me, with another relation, Jeon Singh. They met Rajinder Singh who had worked in Jagraon and was familiar with Gagra's land. Rajinder Singh recommended Gagra as he rated its land highly. Some of our friends and relatives went to other villages, among these Rahaun, Mahaun [near Khanna], and Mullanpur. But a number a families decided for Gagra, including some who had first gone elsewhere. As more families arrived than the surplus land authorities asked families who owned more than one *murabba* to move out to other villages.

Q : How was the new village?

A : Gagra had many Muslim families who had just departed. So we occupied the houses vacated by the Muslims. It was just 'grab and occupy'. Later, claims were filed in an office at Jalandhar where refugee records were transferred. In 1951,

we were allotted permanent houses. Land was allotted by 1954 on a permanent basis. We received 28 acres on the basis of quality-quantity ratio after calculation of our lands in the bar and its soil.

Q : How did you see your new life, were you worried?

A : Initially, it was so heart-searching, migration and displacement. Questions came rushing to our minds; how to survive, and we were just facing too many problems. We would congregate in the evening and consider our options one by one. There was remarkable unity and sympathy among kin relations. Gradually we felt relaxed and saw ourselves like many thousand others in a similar desperate situation. Indeed, as we looked around, many others were worse than us, especially those who had lost their relatives in the carnage. We considered ourselves lucky in that our women and children had arrived safely. Many others around us were not, that gave us some hope.

Q : Were refugees frowned upon?

A : Yes, we were taunted by the term, sometimes we were called *panahgir*, more often, refugees. Someone will say, look, 'a refugee is here'. We would try to divert the conversation by saying, 'we are your brothers' and sometimes argue 'we are not refugees, and we have come back to our native lands', did not we have everything here? But natives would not consider it this way. Some did help us, others were hostile. 'Refugee' was a shameful term, a tag we carried for year, whenever the term was mentioned, we felt ashamed. It still does.

Q : How did you re-build your life?

A : Gradually, especially after permanent land settlement, we took many initiatives. In our new village, we experimented with a Co-operative Society, pooling our resources together. Eight families joined together to form an agricultural cooperative, this was suggested by Rajinder Singh and my brother agreed, though I was in favour, this Cooperative Society was noticed by many outsiders. In fact, Partap Singh Kairon-then Punjab agriculture minister visited to see our experiment. On that day, we arranged a big feast, serving lavish meals of chicken and goat meat. Our womenfolk cooked together and presented a memorable scene to outsiders. The Cooperative Society then bought a tractor. This required cooperation all around, We allocated duties among all the Society members depending upon their abilities, pay was equal and fixed at Rs 45 per month. A manager was nominated to keep accounts of income and expenses. Partap Singh Kairon, on that occasion, promised us concessionary credit for some agricultural items, but it was never delivered. He had lunch with us, eating only *Sag* and *makki di roti*. This cooperative experiment lasted just four years, when problems piled up relating to share of work and free-riders. We split up and have managed our own lands and of course made great strides.

Q : How do you look back?

A : Well, God's will is somewhere there. It had to happen. The bar had canals, the water was available which was the prime reason of its prosperity. However as I look back, if we had stayed there, we would have been very poor indeed. Water is the backbone of farming, in the bars, water was available from canals only, which is

not adequate for modern crops. Here in Gagra, we can use underground water also. In the bar, we worked so hard. Many times with a lantern in one hand at midnight I walked into the farms saving each ounce of water. We used to walk 5-6 miles at a stretch in the middle of the night.

Q : How is your old bar village, any connection?

A : My brother [Nirmal Singh who has settled in England since 1964] made a visit to Pakistan when he especially visited our old village in Lyallpur. He told me how the village is quite poor compared to Gagra. What he told me, it is not much better than what we left behind in 1947. The village has only two tractors and two scooters. Lands are managed badly by Muslim farmers who are more interested in smoking *hookahs* and enjoy ostensible living. A lot of land is barren again. Here, in Gagra all farms are irrigated by underground water. Almost every household owns a tractor, with a scooter in every home, some families even sport a car. All houses are brick-built. According to my brother, houses in the bar village are congested and dirty, many houses still of mud, with only a few brick built.

Q : Would You like to see the old village?

A : Yes very much so. Two years ago, we arranged for our passports and were set to join Panja Sahib pilgrimage organised by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. However, as my passport was valid for a further 6 months only, the trip was not possible. I will avail of another opportunity.

Q : How are your memories and affection for years in the bar?

A : Oh very much so. On many nights I dream of those lands, walking them, my feet in canal's sultry water. As I wake up from such a dream, I feel sad and nostalgic.

Q : On partition, any thoughts?

A : I think, It was all for some good, we don't know. We have more facilities here, better land and good farms. I consider we are better off than had we stayed there.

Q : Did experience of canal colonies help in farming here?

A : Very much so. Our 'refugee methods' were imitated by natives here. We were first to arrange for underground water for Gagra farms, and adopted new seeds enthusiastically. We were several years ahead in doing all sort of farm practices. These people would laugh or mock us at our risks but we knew it pays to experiment. Hence I was the first farmer in Gagra to grow a variety of vegetables and cash crops, thinking the proximity of Jagraon as a town will have a ready market for fresh produce. This proved to be right judgement. Later other farmers followed us. Similarly we invested much money in farm machinery, buying a tractor first, then dug a tubewell for underground water. This obviously paid in higher yields.

Only thing I was last to do in the village was to build a new house in place of our old dwelling. You see, for years, there was never a proper feeling of settlement in this place. Somehow a feeling of being a refugee still hovered in some corner of my mind. This feeling had departed only as I have grown quite old and as my grandchildren were born into this household. Still I feel I have spent more money on this new house than I should have done. After all what we saw in the partition days, a feeling of uncertainty would never depart from my inner mind.

Glossary

<i>abadī</i>	Village site
<i>arhtīā</i>	commission agent
<i>banīā</i>	A Hindu shopkeeper
<i>bār</i>	land between two rivers
<i>barānī</i>	waste land, watered by rainfall only
<i>batai</i>	rent taken by division of crops
<i>chak</i>	a colony village
<i>chakī</i>	A hand-rotated mill for grinding wheat into flour
<i>chamār</i>	low caste Sikh
<i>ghī</i>	clarified butter
<i>ghorhīpāl</i>	one who reared horses and was given land
<i>gurdwara</i>	sikh temple
<i>jaṡr</i>	land granted by officials for certain category of persons
<i>jathā</i>	a band of Sikhs
<i>Jhīwar</i>	a water carrier
<i>jaṡmanī</i>	relationship between service and landholding castes
<i>kaṡla</i>	Refugees moving in groups and columns
<i>lumbardār</i>	village headman officially appointed headman of a village
<i>mandī</i>	market
<i>marlā</i>	1/160th of an acre
<i>maund</i>	an old standard of weight-roughly equivalent to 36 Killogrammes.
<i>moghā</i>	canal watercourse outlet
<i>murabbā</i>	25 acres of land
<i>murabbabandī</i>	Land settlement in post-partition years
<i>nāī</i>	a barber
<i>nimani</i>	a day in the month of <i>Jeth</i> when land is leased for the next year.
<i>panchayat</i>	a village assembly
<i>pattī</i>	a subdivision of village
<i>sahukār</i>	professional moneylender
<i>sanjhī</i>	an agricultural labourer, receiving payment in kind
<i>Sirkār</i>	government or a government officer
<i>Tahsil</i>	revenue and administrative unit of a district
<i>tarkhan</i>	a carpenter
<i>zail</i>	A group of villages amalgamated for administrative purposes
<i>zaildār</i>	A local notable appointed to the charge of a Zail.

GOVERNMENTAL INSTABILITY OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN THE INDIAN STATES —A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB

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Since 1947, four coalitional ministries have been formed in Punjab. The Chief Ministers of all the four ministries (all Akalis) tried their level best to keep the ministries stable in order to keep themselves in power even by providing substantial share of ministerial offices to the junior partners (share out of proportion to the numerical strength of the partners in the legislature),¹ by manoeuvring defections from other political parties in the state particularly the Congress, by providing defectors the ministerial births and other similar rewards,² by expanding the ministry time and again to include more and more members of the ruling coalition to fulfil their aspirations³, and by making necessary amendments in the programme of the party to accommodate the junior partners or to, receive the support of other parties in case of major crisis in the event of withdrawal of support by any partner of the coalition.⁴ But despite these and some other efforts of the Chief Ministers, none of the coalitional ministry could become stable and complete its normal term of five years. The following Table (4.1) shows the stability-index of the coalitional ministries in Punjab :

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1. For example, the Jana Sangh always got higher representation in the ministry as compared to its numerical strength in the legislature. For detailed analysis of ministerial distribution among different partners of the coalition governments, see J. A. Khan, "Akali Dal in Punjab Politics (1966-77)", an unpublished M. Phil. dissertation submitted to K. U. Kurukshetra, 1979, pp. 154-55 and 163.
2. For detailed study of the defection and power politics in Punjab see Subhash Kashayap, *The Politics of Power* (Delhi, 1974), pp. 381-443.
3. *Ibid.*
4. For example, in order to receive the support of Congress (R) to save the Badal Ministry, Sant Fateh Singh (The then president of Akali Dal) issued a long statement on the "Policy and Programme" of the Party on July 20, 1970. This statement showed a great deviation of the party from its earlier programmes. For full text of the Sant's statement, see, *The Statesman*, July 23, 1970.

Table 4.1
STABILITY-INDEX OF COALITIONAL MINISTRIES IN PUNJAB

S. No.	Name of the Ministry	Date of formation	Date of downfall	Total duration in days
1.	United Front Ministry of Gurnam Singh	8.3.1967	22.11.1967	260
2.	Akali-Jana Sangh. Coalition of Gurnam Singh	17.2.1969	26.3.1970	405
3.	Akali-Jana Sangh Coalition of P. S. Badal	27.3.1970	14.6.1971	446
4.	Akali-Janta Coalitional Ministry of P. S. Badal.	23.6.1977	17.2.1980	972

Average duration of Coalitional Ministry=521 days.

Their instability discredited coalitional politics. Hence, what is needed is a fresh thinking on the problems of these governments,⁵ for once the malady is found the remedy would be easy to discover. In the absence of such an investigation of the causes of instability of coalitional governments, the inter-party coalitional governments may continuously move in a circle of birth and decay. So, let us see the causes of instability of these governments one by one in the chronological order.

The First United Front (U.F.) Government of Gurnam Singh :

The first U.F. ministry took oath on March 8, 1967. The ministry fell, when on the Congress's assured support, Mr. Lachhman Singh Gill (the Irrigation and Power Minister) left the U.F. on November 22, 1967, with his 16 other colleagues to form his own government. The major reasons of their defection and consequent fall of the ministry were as under :

1. Role of the Congress Party in Punjab

Since the Congress Party in Punjab was able to retain a sizeable number of seats in the Assembly, some of the M.L.As of the U.F. particularly the Akalis, who were not satisfied with their positions in the U.F. ministry, often thought of negotiating with the Congress for its support in order to form a government in which they could have much say and better status. They received encouragement from the Congress in this process as the latter itself remained always ready to support those persons from the U.F. who could challenge the position of Sant

5. Earlier also, various studies of the causes of governmental instability have been made. The main among them are : Michael Taylor and V. M. Herman, "Party Systems and Governmental Stability" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 (1), March 1971, pp. 28-37; Duncun MacRae, Jr. *Parliament, Parties, and Society in France : 1946-58* (New York, 1967); Lawrance C. Dodd, *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1976); and Paul R. Brass, "Party Systems and Government Stability in Indian States" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71 (4), December 1977, pp. 1384-1405.

Fateh Singh and his Akali Dal⁶, which was its main political rival in the state. This contributed towards instability of the government.

2. Role of Central Congress Party Government

The Congress Party at the centre could not tolerate the U.F., Ministry in the state because of its increasing popularity among the people of Punjab. Its popularity among the people was mainly due to its impressive performance.⁷ The Congress party made every effort to topple the ministry. It may be mentioned here that if the ruling party at the centre had not taken keen interest in toppling the ministry, the latter could endure for sometime more and the move of Mr. Lachhman Singh Gill (if at all he had revolted) must have flopped.

3. Weightage Given to Defectors in the Ministry

Some of the members of U.F. especially those belonging to Akali Dal were dissatisfied with the Front's leadership because of its policy to provide key posts to the defectors from the Congress and the independents at the expense of its own members. They thought that this was being done at their cost. The situation was successfully exploited by the vested interests within the Akali Dal. Table 4.2 shows the party-wise composition of the ministry:

Table 4.2
PARTY-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICES IN THE
FIRST UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT

<i>Party Label</i>	<i>Numerical strength in the legislature</i>	<i>Cabinet Minis- ters</i>	<i>State Minis- ters</i>	<i>Deputy Minis- ters</i>	<i>Parlia- mentary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Congress Defectors	7	1	2	3	-	6
Independents	8	1	-	3	-	4
Akali Dal	24	2	-	-	-	2
Jana Sangh	9	2	-	-	-	2
C.P.I.	5	1	-	-	-	1
R.P.I.	3	1	-	-	1	2
Total	56	8	2	6	4	20

Source : Compilations from Newspapers.

4. Dominant Role of the Jana Sanghis and the Communists in Policy Making

Few members of the U.F. were dis-satisfied because of the fact that in the policy making, only the Jana Sanghis and the Communists counted much. In fact,

6. Firstly, it instigated Mr. Harcharan Singh Hudiara (an Akali M.L.A) to revolt against his own party. After being unsuccessful in bringing down the ministry through him, it prepared Mr. Lachhman Singh Gill for this purpose, who successfully did this work on November 22, 1967.
7. For detail see J. A. Khan, "Sarkaran Di Sathirta Ate Asardaikta : Pahila Sanjha Morcha Sarkar da ik Adhyan," Samaj Vigyan Patar (Punjabi), Vol. 31, Sept. 1990, Pbi. Uni. Patiala.

all the major policy decisions of the U.F. were used to be a compromise between the Jana Sangh and the C.P.I. This phenomenon irritated the members belonging to other parties in the coalition and they developed a feeling for such a government in which neither of them should be represented.

5. Internal Contradiction of Coalitional Partners

The first U.F. ministry from the very beginning of its career continued to suffer from internal contradictions. Some of the coalitional partners (particularly the C.P.I. and the Jana Sangh) held entirely different views on the issues like government policy regarding language, food zones, state trading in food grains and labour policy, etc. Because of these contradictions, some of the important programmes of the government had to be dropped. The non-implementation of the Punjabi language programme in the state due to Akali-Jana Sangh differences on this issue can be cited as the best example in this regard. The phenomenon was fully exploited by the power-seekers to mobilise the members of the U.F. It may be mentioned here that one of the major reasons for L.S. Gill's success in mobilising 16 members of the U.F. to defect was his ability to successfully exploit the failure of the government on this front.

6. Personal Ambitions

The most important factor which led to the downfall of the U.F. ministry was the personal ambitions of Mr. L.S. Gill and some other members of the U.F. In fact, the struggle for leadership of the U.F. within the Akali Dal started soon after the formation of the Government. Though Mr. Gurnam Singh was elected leader, but Mr. L.S. Gill could never accept his leadership. He thought that since he was senior to Mr. Gurnam Singh in the Party, the Chief Ministership should have gone to him. So, in the subsequent days he continued to try for this. Additionally, there were some other members of the U.F. who were desirous of becoming ministers.

It is thus evident that dissensions in the Akali Dal, personal ambitions of some of the legislators, politics of the central ruling party, presence of a strong opposition, and ideological difference among coalitional parties were among the main reasons of the early downfall of ministry.

Akali-Jana Sangh Coalition of Gurnam Singh

The Akali-Jana Sangh coalitional government headed by Mr. Gurnam Singh was sworn-in on February 17, 1969. The ministry functioned till March 25, 1970. The government was toppled by the Akalis themselves when they turned down the budget proposal of the C.M., with the help of their coalitional partner, the Jana Sangh. But why did the Akalis themselves bring their ministry, headed by Gurnam Singh, down and pushed the state into a new period of instability? If the developments in Punjab are reviewed in retrospect the following factors would seem to be responsible for this phenomenon.

1. Sant—Gurnam Singh Conflict

Ever since the Akali-Jana Sangh coalition was formed the gulf between Gurnam Singh (the C.M.) and Sant Fateh Singh (President of the Akali Dal) started widening. The primary factor for conflict was that each wanted to assert that he was the real source of power in the state. The conflict deepened with the same intensity with

which Sant Fateh Singh's popularity started declining. In fact, the process began when veteran freedom fighter Mr. Darshan Singh Pheruman started his fast unto death. When Pheruman's tragic end came, mass anger against Sant Fateh Singh reached its peak. It was in this situation that Mr. Gurnam Singh and his supporters made a bold attempt to identify themselves with the masses feeling arising out of Pheruman's death. This made the Sant bitter against Gurnam Singh. Hereafter also, Mr. Gurnam Singh took some more steps which continued to annoy the Sant. Firstly, being apprehensive of the Sant's move to dislodge him, he began to come closer to the members of the Master group of Akali Dal, which was totally against the Sant. Secondly, after successfully negotiating a deal with the centre on the Chandigarh issue and saving the life of the Sant by tactfully accepting the central government's 'Award on Chandigarh', he began to consider himself the top most politician of Punjab. Additionally, during the parleys, he had developed good relations with the central leaders particularly the P.M. with this background in mind, he began to resent the Sant's interference in the day-to-day administration of the state. Thirdly, the C.M. failed to see eye to eye with the Sant in the selection of candidates in the biennial elections of Rajya Sabha to be held on March 25, 1970. The Sant, after being authorised by the party's Working Committee, fielded two candidates (Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jathedar Santokh Singh of Delhi) as official nominees of the Akali Dal. Both the candidates were from Akali Dal (S). No member was nominated from the Master Tara Singh group of Akali Dal. Therefore, this group had every reason to be annoyed at the Sant's arbitrary decision which was described as "undemocratic." So, the Master group nominated Giani Bhupinder Singh (Chairman of the Parliamentary Board of Akali Dal) as the third candidate in violation of the party directive. It was generally believed that Giani Bhupinder Singh entered the election fray on an assurance from the C.M., who had managed support for him by entering into a secret deal with the Congress.⁸ Considering it to be move to degrade him, the Sant decided to teach him a lesson for his 'treachery.'

2. Dissatisfaction of Akali M.L.As with the Chief Minister :

Luckily for the Sant, most of the Akali M.L.As were also dissatisfied with the leadership of Gurnam Singh because of his dictatorial attitude towards them.⁹ Their main grievances against him were :

- (1) He used to do what he liked and not what the M.L.As desired¹⁰;
- (2) The major appointments in the state were made from among his friends and relatives¹¹.
- (3) The only group dear to him was the Master group of Akali Dal whom he used to consult on every important matter.

Disappointed with this attitude of the C.M., they approached the Sant and offered him their full co-operation to pull down the Gurnam Singh Ministry. Had not the C.M. annoyed the M.L.As with his personal behaviour it would have been

8. Kashayap, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

9. Mr. Balwant Singh (an important Akali leader) during an informal talk with the author at his residence preferred to call this attitude of Mr. Gurnam Singh as 'bureaucratic'.

10. D. C. Pavate, *My Days as Governor* (Delhi, 1975), p. 129.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

impossible for the Sant to topple his government.*

3. Role of the Jana Sangh :

The Sant could never take the risk of initiating a move against Gurnam Singh for his overthrow from the Chief Ministership, had he not been assured of Jana Sangh's support. The Jana Sangh supported this move against Gurnam Singh mainly because of some reasons. They were :

- (1) He never cared to consult them in the formation of major policies of the government¹²;
- (2) He was coming under more and more influence of the Master group of Akali Dal which irritated the Jana Sangh¹³;
- (3) Intermingling of religion with politics by some of the supporters of the Chief Minister in the Ministry¹⁴;
- (4) The Jana Sangh thought that by virtually dividing the Akalis and making one of the group exclusively dependent upon it for its government's survival, it would be in a better position to bargain.

It will not be out of place to mention here that this time the Congress which had sufficient strength in the Assembly, could not effect the stability of coalitional government because defectors in large number were not available to it to play the game to toppling the government it played in 1967.

From the above discussion it follows that the clash of personalities of Sant Fateh Singh (President of Akali Dal) and Mr. Gurnam Singh (the C.M.), the dictatorial attitude of the C.M., towards legislators of his own party (i.e., Akali Dal) and his inability to win the confidence of Jana Sangh were the main reasons of the downfall of his government.

Akali-Jana Sangh Coalitions Government Under P.S. Badal :

This Ministry remained in office only for 446 days. It may be mentioned here that like earlier coalitional government in the state, it was not toppled by defections. The C.M. himself recommended the Assembly's dissolution to the Governor. But why did he recommend dissolution? If the political developments of this period are reviewed, the following reasons would seem to be responsible for this.

1. Dilemma created by Dissensions in the Akali Dal :

The first and foremost reason which led the C.M. to recommend dissolution of the Assembly was the dilemma created before him by dissensions in his own party.

12. One such instance quoted was the affiliation of 46 colleges of the four districts (i.e. Amritsar, Jalandhar, Gurdaspur and Kapurthala) to the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The Jana Sangh criticised the C.M. for not taking the cabinet into confidence while taking decision on such an important issue. For more details, see *The Statesman*, March 21, 1970.
13. He began to come closer to the members of the erstwhile Master group in the Akali Dal as he saw that Sant Fateh Singh had determined to see him out of the power. To counter his move, only the Master group, who was anti-Sant ever since its merger in the main Akali Dal because of his pro-Jana Sangh orientation, could help him.
14. For example, one of the supporters of the C.M., Mr. Atma Singh (the Revenue Minister), was reported to have forced the government employees to follow strictly the tenets of the Sikh religion. He made it clear time and again that as an Akali Minister, he had the right not only to promote Sikh religion but to see that its tenets were strictly observed. For more details, see *The Link* (Weekly), June 8, 1969; p. 17.

In fact, soon after the defeat of Akali dal in the March 1971 Lok Sabha Elections¹⁵, cracks in the party started coming into open. Some of the Akali M.L.As and even the ministers themselves began to criticise their own government for corruption. While some of them merely demanded the removal of allegedly corrupt ministers from the government,¹⁶ the others even went to the extent of serving time-bound ultimatums on the C.M. for ordering a judicial enquiry into the allegations of corrupt practices against such ministers¹⁷. They created a dilemma before the C. M. If he dropped some ministers alleged to be corrupt, there was every possibility of losing their support, and if on the other hand, he did not, there was a danger of an open rift in the party. So, in either case he was sure to lose majority support in the Assembly.

2. Fear of the Congress :

Another reason for this action of C.M., was his fear of the Congress, which had sufficient strength in the Assembly, to topple the government with the help of dissatisfied elements in the Akali Dal. In fact, the Congress party had declared openly that it will topple the ministry in the coming session of the Assembly. And it was also on open secret that Mr. Gurnam Singh, who had rejoined the Akali Dal on November 26, 1970¹⁸, was now conspiring with the Congress to settle his previous accounts with the Akali leadership. Additionally, it was generally believed that he (Mr. Gurnam Singh) had been assured of the Congress's support by its central leadership in case he was successful to bring sufficient number of M.L.As from the ruling party with him.

3. No Hope of Support from other Non-Congress Parties in the States :

In the situation mentioned above, only the support of non-Congress parties in the State could provide some security to the government for its survival in the coming session of Assembly in June 1970. The Akali leaders tried their level best to get it but failed. The Jana Sangh leader Dr. Baldev Parkash clearly told the Akalis that his party would never support the ministry or try to save it in the face of charges of widespread corruption and mal-administration in the state. He said that the Jana Sangh might even sponsor the no-confidence motion against the ministry, if required.¹⁹

The above mentioned factors left no better alternative with the C.M. but to recommend dissolution of Assembly to the Governor.

15. The party wise position for the 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab after the March 1971 election was : Congress=10, C.P.I.=2 and Akali Dal=1. For details see, *Elections Commission Reports*.

16. For example Mr. Sohan Singh Bassi (a Cabinet Minister) asked the Chief Minister to reduce the "oversized" ministry by "squeezing out the corrupt ministers" See *The Statesman*, June 3, 1971.

17. The leading among them was a Minister of State, Mr. Tarlochan Singh Riasti, who went to the extent of serving an ultimatum on the C.M., that if the corrupt ministers were not removed by June 8, 1971, he would be "constrained to leave the ministry." See *Ibid*.

18. He was expelled from Akali Dal in March 1970 "for his treachery and working against the interests of the party." It is believed that he played a key role in sabotaging the electoral alliance between the Dal and the Congress and thus kept the two parties apart.

19. See *Ibid*, June 9, 1971.

Akali-Janta Coalitional Ministry of Parkash Singh Badal :

The Janta-Akali coalitional ministry came into being on June 23, 1977, till 17th February 1980. As Table 4.1 shows, it was the most durable coalitions formed by the Akali Dal since reorganisation of the state. But it was dismissed by the central government along with other non-Congress (1) ministries in nine states on 17th Feb. 1980.²⁰ The main reason given for the dismissal was that "after the Lok Sabha elections, some state governments and the Assemblies no longer reflected the views or wishes of the electorate."²¹ It may be mentioned here that all the five Janta party Ministers withdrew from the government on September 3, 1979.²² After that the Akali Dal alone run the government. The immediate reason for the withdrawal to Janta Party's support from the coalitional government in Punjab was the Akali Dal's decision to support Mr. Charan Singh (a leader of the breakaway group of the Janta Party named Janta-S) instead Mr. Morarji Desai (leader of the Janta Party) in a trial of strength between the two for Prime Ministership. The comparatively long duration of this government was due to several factors, The main among them were :

1. Though the struggle for power within the Akali Dal was going on but no one could successfully challenge the leadership of the C.M., mainly because the numerical strength of other political parties in the state had been insignificant.²³ That is to say, no party outside the coalition had sufficient strength in the Assembly to form an alternative government with the help of defectors from the ruling party or the vice-versa.
2. True, the Akali Dal had some differences with the Janta Party (its coalitional partner) mainly on the issues of state autonomy and the Nirankaris²⁴, but the major differences which it had with the Jana Sangh, the dominant constituent partner of the Janta party (like language issue) had been resolved with the passage of time. The result had been that the Akali-Janta coalitional government could endure for longer period than the other coalitional governments formed by the Akali Dal.
3. The coalition between the two parties (Akali Dal and the Janta Party) at the central level also contributed towards stability of the government in more than one way.
4. During emergency (i.e., from June 1975 to January 1977) most of the leaders of Akali Dal and the Janta Party remained together in Jails and

20. These nine states were : Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Orissa and Gujrat. See, *The Hindustan Times*, Feb. 18, 1980.

21. For details See *The Tribune*, February 18, 1980.

22. The resignations of the Janta Ministers were submitted to the Party Chief, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, on August 19, a day after the Akali Dal decided to support Mr. Charan Singh in the scheduled vote of confidence. Late, Mr. Chandra Shekhar referred the resignation letter to the Chief Minister. For More details see *The Tribune*, September 4, 1979.

23. The party-wise position in the 117 seats Punjab Assembly after the June 1977 elections was : Akali Dal=58, Janta Party=25, Congress=17, C.P.M.=8, CPI=7 and Independent=2. For details of the results of this election, see *Asian recorder*, July 2-8, 1977, p. 13811.

24. For details on the differences of the two partners on these issues, see I. A. Khan, "Coalitional Politics in Punjab (March 1967 to February 1980)," unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to K. U. Kurukshetra, 1984, pp. 177-185.

thus developed fellow feelings among themselves. This experience taught them a lesson to remain together to put up a united opposition to the Congress politics in the future.

5. Since Mr. P. S. Badal played a leading role in the morchas launched by the Akali Dal during emergency, he was in a better position to lay his claim to the leadership of the A.L.P., specially, when the other ex-Akali Chief Minister Mr. Gurnam Singh had been dead. This undisputed leadership of Mr. P. S. Badal also contributed towards stability of Akali-Janta coalitional government in Punjab.
6. Above all, accommodating nature of Mr. P. S. Badal and his close intimacy with the leaders of the Janta Party helped him a lot to keep his flock together and consequently to keep his government stable.

It has been seen above that no coalition in the state has endured for long. Let us try to determine the reason for this. Firstly, the most important factor of the governmental instability in the state has been due to the lack of internal coherence within the Akali Dal. Since the Akali Dal has been the leading party in all the coalitions, its internal weakness has affected the stability of coalitional governments. Differences in the Akali Dal have been mainly on sharing positions and offices in the party; the S.G.P.C., and the ministry; and the interference of Sant's and Jathedars (those belonging to S.G.P.C. and party organisation) in the administrative matters of the state government.

Secondly, the instability of coalitional governments has been due to the political immaturity of the Jana Sangh/Janta party leadership, which has on many occasions over played its hand in bargaining with the Akalis. Of course, at times they had a good case to argue to promote and protect the interests of those whom they represented. But in such a situation instead of entering into negotiations and using the process of give and take the Jana Sangh/Janta leaders would give the ultimatum that if their demands were not met, they would quit the coalition. This was done at least four times; and at one time on the issues which were not fundamental.

Thirdly, the role of extremists among the Akalis and the Hindus have greatly affected the stability of coalitional governments in the state. Whenever there arose controversy between the two coalitional partners on any issue the extremists among both the communities (i.e. Sikh and the Hindus) tried to give it a communal shape. They also exerted pressure on their respective organisations not to accommodate on that particular issue. This made difficult for the two parties to reconcile and resolve even minor issues like that of language etc. Fourthly, one of the reasons of instability of coalitional governments has been that there was no ideological affinity among the coalitional partners. So, in the absence of any ideological base how could they remain united for long? Their differences on major ideological issues gave rise to the intra-party as well as inter-party conflicts which in turn led to the speedy downfall of coalitional governments.

Fifthly, in order to be stable, coalitional governments in particular require highly skilled and accommodative leadership of the C.M. The absence of such a

leadership usually give rise to instability. In Punjab, the variation in the duration of some of the coalitional government, were mainly due to the quality of leadership it had. For example, while the accommodating leadership of Mr. P. S. Badal was one of the major reasons for the comparatively long durations of Akali Janta Coalitional government. The early down fall of the first Akali-Jana Sangh coalitional ministry could be attributed to the failure of Mr. Gurnam Singh to accommodate different sections in the coalition.

Sixthly, the presence of a strong opposition party have near-majority in the legislature has always posed a danger to the stability of coalitional governments in the state. It is perhaps because of this that the coalitional governments formed during 1967-71 were less stable than the Akali-Janta government formed in June 1977. So, it can be said that the stability of coalitional governments in Punjab has been negatively related to the voting strength of the opposition in the legislature.

Seventhly, the personal ambitions of the legislators also contribute a lot to the instability of coalitional governments in the state. In fluid situation some of the legislators always remained ready to defect if it could serve their power motives. Some of them defected even twice or thrice under the same government. This phenomenon remained quite conspicuous during the first phase of coalitional politics (1967-71) where the defection of a few members from one side to the other upset the whole balance and caused downfall of a government.

Eighthly, the defeat of the ruling party/parties in the state in the Lok Sabha elections also contributed to the instability of the coalitional government in the state. It may be mentioned here that whenever the ruling party/parties of the state is/are defeated at the polls in the Lok Sabha elections, immediately thereafter the stability of the state government (may be coalition or one party) is threatened either by the possibility of defections or the dismissal by the new central government. In the last few years it has become a convention that after coming into power at the centre the new ruling party dismisses all the state governments ruled by the opposition parties.

Ninthly, the lack of tolerance of the party of central government to see the central non-participatory coalitions (i.e. in which the ruling party at centre is not a partner) in power has contributed a lot to the instability of coalitional governments in the state. During the first phase of coalitional politics, as Paul R. Brass rightly pointed out, "It was commonly charged by the opposition party leaders that the national leadership of the Congress frequently sent emissaries to state capitals to persuade, wheedle, cajole, and bribe opposition politicians to defect and thus bring down non-Congress regimes."²⁵

Lastly, if the central ruling party is a partner in the coalition, the split in its rank at the national level may effect the stability of a coalitional government in the state. For example, the stability of Akali-Janta coalition in Punjab was affected by the split in the Janta Party at the national level.

25. Paul R. Brass, "Party Systems and Government Stability in the Indian States", *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 71(4), December 1977, p. 1394.

Book Review

LANDMARKS IN SIKH HISTORY (1699-1947)

by Prof M. L. Ahluwalia, Delhi, Price Rs. 400/- p. 347.

In order to study the History of modern India, it is essential to study History of the Sikhs who had played a significant role in shaping the map of India. They were the makers of modern Punjab as they wrested it from the Afghan Emperor Ahmad Shah Abdali during the 18th century. But for Sikhs Punjab would have remained a part of Afghanistan. During the first half of 19th century, Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir which was part of Afghan empire and carried arms beyond Jamrud to turn the tide of invasions which had been rolling on in India for the last eight centuries. The Maharaja decisively defeated Afghans in well contested battles of Naushera (1823), of Saido (1827), and Bala Kot (1831). The Afghans who had not been defeated by Indians for centuries and considered Sikhs as *Kafirs* (non-believers) got utterly confused and began to say *Khalsa hum Khuda Shuda*—Khalsa too has become believer of God.

Prof. M. L. Ahluwalia's book *Landmarks in Sikh History (1699-1947)* is welcome addition to the Sikh history literature. Prof. Ahluwalia is a well known author who has a number of books relating to Sikh history to his credit. He has devoted his entire life in pursuit of documents relating to history of Sikhs in various state archives and the National Archives, New Delhi from where he has retired as Deputy Director.

The book under review has got seventeen chapters viz. first, the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh; second, about Sikh Republic under Banda Singh; third, Sikh Republic under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia; fourth, Sikh Sovereignty under Ranjit Singh. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters have been devoted to the fall of Sikh empire beginning from death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1839) in the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845). The eighth chapter "The Interlude" deals with circumstances leading to first Sikh war of 1845 and ninth the "Great Betrayal by the British" deals with the post-war development. The tenth "National Revenge" gives sufficient information about the second Anglo-Sikh War and annexation of the Punjab. The eleventh chapter "Taste of British Raj" gives the details of repression and reforms. The twelfth is "Jindan takes on Dalhousie" and thirteenth "Dalip Singh as Crusador". The Chapter fourteenth, to seventeenth deal with the movement viz. Namdhari Singh Sabha and the Gurdwara Reform Movement and Akali Movements.

The book under review is the *Magnum opus* of the author as it gives a complete history of Khalsa whereas his other books deal with one part or the other of history

of the Sikhs. As is clear from the titles of the chapters, new interpretation has been given from the Indian point of view. Some of the striking titles are "National Revenge" dealing with the causes of Second Anglo-Sikh War, "Jindan takes on Dalhousie" giving details of Rani Jind Kaur's struggle against the British. "Dalip Singh as Crusador" dealing with efforts of Maharaja Dalip Singh to enter India with the help of Russian Government etc. etc. Actually there has been a twist in favour of the British in the records left by the colonial government. Prof. Ahluwalia has also admitted it when he writes, "so much contradiction has been bequeathed to us in the archival wealth left by the British administrators" (page vi). The author has tried to set the record straight by removing this twist. This can be further explained by the example of Rani Jind Kaur, the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

In all the accounts given by the British authors she has been maligned with character assassination viz. she was maligned as beloved of Raja Lal Singh, Dalip Singh was illegitimate child of Jindan etc. etc. But amidst all these damaging remarks, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General who annexed Punjab in 1849, writes, "She was the only male in Punjab" meaning thereby that she was the only person who understood the British policy in Punjab. Secretly, she inspired Diwan Mul Raj to rise against the British who revolted in Multan and Chattr Singh and Sher Singh Attari who fought the bloody battles of Chellianwala and Gujarat in 1848-49. Like a true Punjabi woman, she was bold and daring. She escaped from the fort of Chunar at dead of night despite strong British contingent on guard duty and reached Nepal after crossing the river Ganges. Prof. Ahluwalia has done service in reconstructing the history of Anglo-Sikh relations in the right perspective. He has established how the British wanted to dismember the great Sikh kingdom during the lifetime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who foiled their efforts to defeat the great power only next to their own in the whole of Asia.

About the nature of Gurdwara Reforms Movement, Prof Ahluwalia has argued that it was part of freedom struggle against the British. After successful Key's Affair Morcha Mahatma Gandhi sent telegram "first battle of Independence won". Pandit Nehru himself got arrested in the Jaito Morcha and in his presidential address on Oct. 13, 1923 he categorically stated Gurdwara Reform Movement was the "vanguard of India's freedom struggle" describing Sikhs "worthy of it" (page 321).

The author has put forth diligent efforts not only to bring forth new material but to present it in scientific way. By doing so he has raised many controversial issues. A few are mentioned below :

1. It has been argued in the chapter on Singh Sabha Movement that the Sikhs are part of Hindus (p. 293).
2. In his chapter in "Banda, servant to the order of the Guru", it has been stated "Banda had not become Amritdhari Sikh is fully proved by news report. Banda's personal flag had goddess Durga and Hanuman painted on it." Dr Ganda Singh's thesis is just the opposite and perhaps more agreeable.

Despite numerous printing mistakes here and there the book is readable. It will be beneficial for the scholars, students and general public who are interested in the study of Sikh history. It is recommended that the book should be approved as reference book by various universities in India and abroad.

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